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Whether you view him as the animated MC or the Ston Snitching poster child. you still don't know BUSTA RHYMES. Here, he lifts his career-long gag order and tells all-from his baby mama drama to his bodyguard's death. And you'd never believe what's been eating Busta all this time. BY CHEO HODARI COKER.

PHOTOGRAPHS BY ALBERT WATSON

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(CONTINUED ON PAGE 10)





LET THE MIME OUT OF HIS INVISIBLE BOX.

A mime is nothing without his vow of silence. And yet that very silence has led to a life of solitude and loneliness. A life filled with endless days in the park, enduring a constant barrage of taunting and abuse. A life defined by its sadly ironic twist as the mime has become an outcast from the very society he is dedicated to entertain. Quietly he scans the crowds that assemble, desperately seeking a kind eye, as he waits for the day he can emerge from his invisible box into the loving embrace of mainstream society.



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EVEN A WALK IN THE PARK IS NO WALK IN THE PARK FOR THIS ABUSED MIME.

Little has been done to bring our white-faced friends into the fold. But Virgin Mobile has heard the silent cry of the mime community and has taken the first step fowards a better world — the Virgin Mobile Switch Back messaging phone. Now we can talk to a mime for the first time in recorded history. Together we can create a world where man and mime walk hand in hand, as friends. We now have a direct line of communication into the mime's heart. Fill it with love and help us BRIDGE THE GAP BETWEEN MAN AND MIME.







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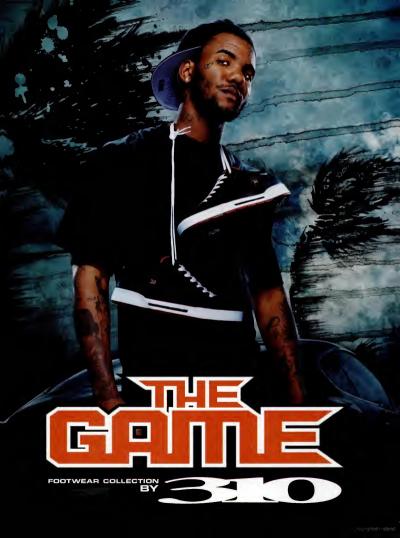
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HOT IN THE GAME

The music, fashion, and entertainment worlds are teeming with young and gifted individuals who are setting trends as well as new standards on how to do business. FORD FUSION and VIBE are proud to highlight a few folks who are putting the GROWN and SEXY in today's mos prominent industries.



NAME: Edward L. Woods Esq. GIG: Attorney At Law

LEGAL EASE

Through his many years as counselor and negotiator, the recently appointed president of the Black Entertainment and Sports Lawyers Association (BESLA) Edward L Woods Esq. is known for combining his street smarts and business savry to maneuver in both corporate America and the urban world. Woods is the executive vice-president of urban music for Casablanca Records, home to pop starlet Lindsay Lohan, Hitman producer/singer Ryan Leslie, and rapper Cory Gunz. He is also a creative consultant to Tommy Mottola and the Mottola Company and recently secured an option for the television and film rights to the book Queens Reigns Supreme: Fat Cat, 50 Cent and the Rise of the Pile Hoo Hustler.

Woods is a 1994 graduate of Howard University Law School (J.D.) and a 1991 graduate of Hampton University (B.A.). In September 2000, he co-founded the firm of Woods & Middleton, LLP, where his understanding of both the picture and the big details earned him a stellar reputation and a 75-client roster list-including major players in the recording, publishing, film, and television industries—in two years' time.

Woods represented some of the biggest names in sports and entertainment, including NBA superstar Allen Iverson, R&B diva Kelly Price, Blackground Entertainment, FUBU, and legendary boxing promoter Butch Lewis.

Woods will serve a two-year term as president of BESLA, where he plans to focus on development and fundraising. His goal is to provide substantially more opportunities and scholarships for young practitioners, aspring lawyers, and students through major fundraising projects. "I intend to utilize all of my resources and relationships to make sure that the next generation of students has even more educational, scholarship, and career opportunities than I did," strated Woods. In his 12 years of practicing law, he has remained committed to helping those who come after him. He has hired 15 lawyers fresh from the law schools of historically black colleges and often speaks to young people at high schools and universities. Woods is always looking forward while reaching back.



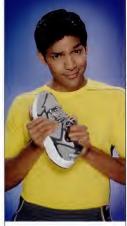




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ANOVOR SUBJECTS









CAUGHT ON TAPE: Images from the cover shoot in Manhattan include photographer Albert Watson (in scarf) looking over a test shot with VIBE Art Director Wyatt Mitchell (top right); while Bust agets his pose on.

TURN IT UP

EVER SINCE BUSTA RHYMES signed with Dr. Dre, expectations have been high about what an amazing album their pairing may bring.

I was able to get an early listen to The Big Bang, and it did not disappoint. There were the usual party joints, but most of it was stuff you'd never expect to hear from Busta—lots of tracks showcased storytelling skillis with introspective lyrics. Without question, this is the best work of his career, and when a major artist delivers a breakthrough album, our instinct is to give it serious coverage.

One problem: Busta's never really been forthcom-

ing about his personal life. He's never said much about his childhood or the baby mama drama we've heard whispers about for years. If gure data before we committed to assigning a major article, it might be best to have lunch with Busta first and find out for myself if he'd be willing to open up.

As the two of us dined at Houston's in midtown Manhattan, I explained VIBE's dilemma. We wanted to spotlight his latest effort but needed him to give our readers some real insight into Trevor Smith. Busta

explained how he was the happiest he's ever been in his entire career, and that he finally felt comfortable discussing things he'd never been willing to share. Cutting off his dredlocks, indeed, represented a new beginning, not simply a new look. When I gob task to the office and told the staff, people were excited. We immediately decided to give Busta our lune could.

Two days later, on February S, Busta's bodyguard Israel "Iz" Ramirez was shot dead in Brooklyn at the video shoot for Busta's "Touch it (Remint)." Upon hearing the news, I was deeply saddened by the sense loss. Busta, who had been so happy at our lunch, was now in mourning. And he was in a tough spot, caugh between the don't-sinick oode of the stress and public outcries to cooperate with the investigation. He took a lot of heat in the local press. In our story ("Mouth Almighty," page 118), writer Cheo Hodari Coker gets Busta to discuss his agonized feelings about the murder and subsequent controversing about the murder and subsequent controversing

Elsewhere in the issue, Associate Music Editor Rondell Conway heads down to Atlanta to report on the snap music scene. Whether you're a fan of D4L or Dem Franchize Boyz, you'll surely enjoy how Conway breaks it all down ("Oh, Snap!" page 132). In our profile of teenage pop star Rihanna ("Social Study." by Rebecca Louie, page 126), you'll find out what makes her not so innocent. This month, we also tip our fitted Yankee cap to a daily paper in the heart of Dixie, The Birmingham News, which unearthed thousands of never-before-seen pictures from the civil rights era and is now making these images-both stirring and disturbing-available for the first time. Check them out in our VGallery feature ("Freedom's Battleground." by Deputy Editor Jamie Katz, page 138). And for some lighter entertainment, don't miss our paparazziinspired fashion story ("The Hunted," page 146). Enjoy!

> MIMI VALDÉS Editor-in-Chief

P.S. If you've got comments about this issue or suggestions for stones you'd like to read, I wanna hear from you! Hit me back at mimi@vibe.com.*

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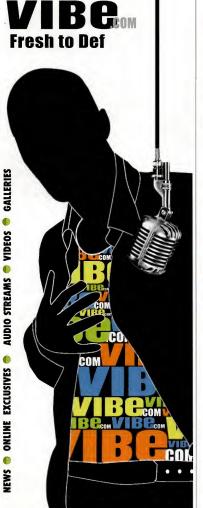
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THE GUEST LIST

> CHEO HODARI COKER

This month: Sits down for a revealing discussion with Busta Rhymes ("Mouth Almighty," page 118)
Lives In: Chicago

Age: 33

Side hustle: Screenwriter and author Inside scoop: "Hanging at the gym with Busta has definitely rubbed in the fact that I need to get back in shape."



> ALBERT WATSON
This month: Snaps Busta for our cover

Born In: Edinburgh, Scotland Age: 63 Portfolio: Rolling Stone, Interview, Italian

Vogue Dream photo subjects: Halle Berry and Salma Havek

Factold: Watson shot Treach for the cover of VIBE's preview issue in 1992.

> NED HARVEY

This month: Shoots our semi-annual tech package ("Summer in Miami," page 101) Resides in: Fort Lauderdale, Fla.

Date of birth: "Way back in the last century."
Portfolio: Samsung, Gillette, Carnival
Cruise Lines

Favorite gadget: Mac PowerBook G4

Dream car: Jaguar XK

In my spare time: "Rather be sailing."





> ANGIE ROMERO

This month: Interviews emerging R&B artist Che'Nelle (Next, page 112) Age: 26

Grew up In: Guayaquil, Ecuador Inside scoop: "Che' Nelle has an inimitable accent and an innocent girl's laughter." Celebrity crush: "Always and forever, Johnny Depp." Current obsession: "Clive Owen!"

> STEVE COHEN

This month: Shoots the Play opener, Exhibit A, Gear, and VStyle

Halls from: "New Jersey 'burbs." Age: 43

Also shoots for: Men's Health, Maxim, Self Favorite sport to watch: "My two 7-year-olds Greco-Roman wrestling." Most fashionable star: Marge Simpson

Next vacation: "Turks and Caicos Islands."





IN-HOUSE COUNSEL > For VIBE Art Assistant STRAVINSKI

PIERRE, 24, creativity is essential to his being. When the FIT grad airst in front of his computer screen designing layouts, ("Freedom's Battleground", page 138) he's usually fantastign about his big-screen aspirations. "I'd like to write and direct my own movies some day," says the Long Island native and Steven Spielberg fan. Action!



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VIBE RATERS

CHECK OUT THE STAFF'S OLD-SCHOOL PLAYLIST

THE PHARCYDE, "Runnin" (Delicious Vinyl):

"All about manning up."

-Celia San Miguel, Associate Editor

> VANITY 6, "Nasty Girl" (Warner):

"Brings out the freak."

FATS WALLER, "Your Feet's Too Big" (RCA):

"And your tongue's stuck in your cheek."

SWITCH, "There'll Never Be" (Gordy):

"Play loud and cruise."
-Leslle dela Vega, Photo Editor

> LL COOL J. "I Need Love" (Def Jam):

"My first serenade."

-Marian Isel Barragán, Associate Photo Edito

CHILL ROB G, "Future Shock" (Wild Pitch):

"The ghost of MCs past."

THE REPLACEMENTS, "I WIII Dare" (Twin/Tone):

"19 again."

-Florian Bachleda, Design Director

> EPMD, "Strictly Business" (Fresh):

"For the '80s babies."

-Rondell Conway, Associate Music Editor

LUTHER VANDROSS, "Never Too Much" (Epic):

"A true gem."

-EunJean Song, Assistant Photo Editor

RICK JAMES, FEAT. SMOKEY ROBINSON, "Ebony Eyes" (Gordy)

"A beautiful combination."

-Memsor Kamaraké, Fashion Director

> MARVIN GAYE, "What's Going On?" (Tamla):

"Sadly, the lyrics are still relevant."

–Jozen Cummings, Researcher

HEART, "Dog & Butterfly" (Portrait):

"Before they went cheesy."
-Lori Yacovone, Managing Editor

WU-TANG CLAN, "C.R.E.A.M." (Cash Rules Everything Around Me) (Loud):

"Still, and always will."
-Stravinski Pierre, Art Assistant

> BOYZ II MEN, "Motownphilly" (Motown):

"Straight from the two-one-fifth!" -Charlotte Davis, Photo Assistant





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www.hotfeetthemusical.com

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THE VIBE SPOT







WHITE BOYZ IN THE MODD

VIEWE poly planet VIEW heated a right of closer
hamon with eight of boday's furnises corrections
to receive the registration of the registrati







VIBE AND THE HOUSE OF COURVOISIER AT ALL-STAR









JAHEIM ALBUM RELEASE PARTY URBE and Warner Brothers Records celebrated viberdrine's Day with Jahnern (7) as he presented his new album, Ghetho Classicus, at New York City's Cielo. (8) Industry tastemakers enjoyed special vibertrine drinks such as Smirtod Red Apple (9) Karlar Radford, executive director of events and artist relations, VIBE evelcomes Jaheim.

For more pictures, visit our gallery et www.vibe.com.

PHOTO CREDITS: Terrence Jennings (1-3), Johnny Nuñez (4-9)

Be prepared for a close encounter with a handsome stranger.





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REEBOK "I AM WHAT I AM"

Congratulations to Adrienne Jones, winner of the Reebok "I Am What I Am" contest. Adrienne will receive a pair of Reeboks for each day of the week and a music prize pack! Visit vibe.com to read Adrienne's winning motto.

ROGUE PICTURES

Check out the new thriller Waist Deep, starring Tyrese Gibson and Meagan Good as a sexy 21st-century Bonnie and Clyde. The film also features Larenz Tate and the Game. Opens in theaters everywhere Friday, June 23.

www.waistdeep.com

SKECHERS

www.skechers.com

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Philadelphia 8/20

Unity Day Chicago 9/2

African Festival of the Arts For complete rules and

eligibility criteria log on to vibe.com or vibevixen.com.

SOMETHING NEW

Something New, sturring Sanaa Lathan, Simon Bäker, Blair Underwood, Airre Woodard, and Mike Epps. Kenya McOusen (Sanaa Lathan) is a successful African-American lawyer working her way to the top of the corporate ladder—but her life has become all work and no play. Urged by her friends to ty something new and to let go of her dream of the "Gleab Daker Man," he accepts a "Gleab Daker Man," he accepts a "Gleab Daker Man," he accepts a landscaper named Britan, only to cut the date short upon first sight, because Brian is white.

Enter between May 16 and June 23 for your chance to win 1 of 10 copies of Something New. Visit vibe.com/contests for complete rules and entry. View the trailer at www.somethingnewmovie.net.

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THE VIBE SPOT





PHOTO CREDITS: Brian Williams (1-2), Margot Jordan (3-5)







It's just as good at multi-tasking

KEEP IT CLEAN: VIBO + Crest PRESENT THE **FRESHEST** NEW ARTIST



Crest and VIBE Magazine have chosen Arkansas-born. 22-year old Ne-Yo as the freshest new artist to hit the music scene. With his lyrical and vocal talents. Ne-Yo is shaking up the music industry infusing a new fresh sound on the radio airwayes. A master in the art of storytelling, Ne-Yo's songs are filled with passion and intense energy that pulls you into the music and puts you into a zone.





IN MY OWN WORDS, the debut album by Def Jam singer/ songwriter Ne-Yo, featuring the pop/R&B crossover smash #1 hit single "So Sick," is in stores now.

Keep It clean and fresh with new Crest Whitening Plus Scope® Extreme. With 50% more Scope you can be 100% more irresistible. Crest and VIBE invite readers to send in one (1 proof-of-purchase of a CREST product with your name









Misunderstood

Thank you for putting Lil Wayne on the cover ["Stay Fly." by Benjamin Meadows-Ingram, April 2006]. In my opinion, Wayne is on top right now; he's one of the best out there in the rap game, not to mention he is one of the best looking! The article was very interesting and well-written, and the pictures were fabulous! I just hope he continues to do his thing and keeps coming out with new albums. He's the best-Tha Carter II was incredible. Weezy, I can't wait to see what you have in store for the rest of your career.

Brooke Piteo, Boynton Beach, Fla.

It's about damn time! I was ecstatic to see Lil Wayne on the cover of VIBE. He is the best rapper alive since the best rapper retired. People really need to start giving credit where it is due. Wayne, I love you, and you can count on having me as a fan, not a groupie, for life!

> Chantel Reid Germantown, Md.

First off, the cover is very disappointing, Lil Wayne looks very ghetto and unclean. All of the tattoos and the gold grill are not attractive. Wayne makes black people look so damn ignorant, and this exemplifies what white people think of us. I think that Lil Wayne should be in a suit with his mouth closed. Or better vet, have T.I. get the full cover.

Dane Gill Seattle, Wash.

Finally! Even The New York Times did a story on Lil Wayne before VIBE! Anyway, better late than never. I'm impressed he's in school and think other college and high school dropout rappers should think about following his example. Weezy's Tha Carter II is without question the best hip hop album of the year. If he don't

win a Grammy next time around. I'm never watching the awards again. Kanve got nothing on Wayne!

> Rich Graves Oueens, N.Y.

I just wanted to bring it to your attention that I take offense to the April cover. I will not question why Lil Wayne owns a belt with the word RAPE on it. I will however question why you allowed this to grace the cover

of VIBE magazine. As we both are aware, rape isn't slang nor hip, rape is a violent crime. predominantly against women. I am not quite sure of your intent with that cover shot, but I must ask that you be much more careful in the future. Please don't assist the culture by supplying our youth with images that can only hurt them and not help them. David Barry Lewis

Via e-mail

I hate to come off as just another "angry black sista," but as a community, we need to take some responsibility about how we are perceived. Don't get me wrong. I love hip hop, but a lot of these artists are immature. sexist, and selfish. I'm all for individuality, but why would you let Lil Wayne pose for the cover with the word Rape on his belt? This was a classless. stupid mistake both on his and your creative team's part. I'm

YOUR BEST SHOT

IAN RUSSELL, BROOKLYN, N.Y.



BALANCING ACT: Ian and Miles perform their magic trick on a subway platform.



PHOTOS: 3 & 7 Mike Guastella. All others Johnny Nunez







VIBE GOES HOLLYWOOD

The managers and staff at Republic Dedra Tate, Mr. Malik, Detra Palmore (IDesigns), Sage Gallon, François Desamours, Cha DeBerry, and Berry Krutchik (Krutchie Entertainment).

MOET & CHANDON NA NA

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Nicole Breedlove Brooklyn, N.Y.

FROM THE EDITOR:
The belt buckle actually says
BAPE, which is a Japanese clothing company favored by artist
ike Pharrell, Busta Rhymes, and
Jay-Z. We're sorry if it caused any
confusion.

Let's Ride

I have always told my son to know black music is to know black history. Thank you so much for the Soul Timin article ["Engine Engine," by Alisha Davis, April 2006]. The program is truly one of the greatest treasures of our culture and times. Great job!

> Jay Chamblin Austin, Texas

Brooklyn, N.Y.

Bad Boys, Bad Boys

Interesting article on the top 20 villains hip hop loves to hate ("Bad Guys," by Gary Dauphin, April 2006]. But there were two glaring omissions: Hans Gruber from Die Hard and Li'l Zé from City of God. Both are great examples of the modern Hollywood badass. Although not including these guys is unforgivable...it is a good article nevertheless.

The Chosen One

This is just a short letter to address a comment Jaheim made ("Rising Son," by Craig Seymour, April 2006] concerning his preference for Latina sisters because they don't know who he is. While everyone has a right to their preferences and I myself have dated outside both my race and culture, I was

offended because it is primarily the African-American community that gave Jaheim both his fame and fortune. It's just another example of our men who, once they achieve something materially, seem to forget where their first allegiance should be. No other race or ethnicity does that but us. Aithab Whitaker Brookbon. NY.

Jaheim is music to my ears. I read the article and am happy to see that he has resurfaced. I've always thought he was a guy with great talent. His voice is reminiscent of the late and great Luther Vandross and is especially appealing because he is a balladeer with street edge. It's good to know that despite his success, he prides himself on being "strict with the realness." That's what I really admire about him.

> Latesha Williams Miami, Fla.

Tough Love

Big up to VIBE for showing love to the females on lock down ("Locked Up," by Mark Allen Johnson, April 2006]. It's messed up to be pregnant while in jail. All I can say for y'all is, Stay strong and focus. *Jernaine Walker*

Jermaine Walker Badin, N.C.

The images of the pregnant women inmates were very powerful. Lan't imagine what it feels like to be pregnant and then probably have to give my baby up. I felt the women's pain through those photos. Lesson learned to all women: Don't do anything to put yourself in that situation. Freedom is priceless.

Chicago, Ill.

MESSAGE BOARD

YOUR TWO CENTS AND THEN SOME, HOT OFF THE SCREENS OF VIBE.COM.

After seven years, Russell and Kimora Lee Simmons have decided to call it quits. Here's what you had to say about hip hop's power couple going their separate ways.

I can't believe this is true. They were the most fabulous couple ever. I wonder what happened. I tell you, If will and Jada break up, I'm gonna totally give up on marriage forever!

That is so depressing. Can't anyone hold a marriage together anymore? They looked so ridiculously happy with each other...I guess you really don't know what goes on behind closed doors.

SugarNspice

I knew something was up when Kimora kept denying it. At least the kids will be taken care of. PrincessPeach

There was always talk that this was just a marriage of convenience but seeing how happy they looked together made that difficult to believe. Regardless of why they broke

up, it's terribly sad to see a hip hop institution fall off.

GoldenGiri

Russell's child support payments may be CRAZY! Power Black

Damni They lasted longer than anyone thought they would.

What happened? You think she's going to leave with everything she came with? NOT!

Brooklyn Bully

VIBE.COM EXCLUSIVE

UNCLE LUKE— THE ORIGINAL PIMP OF HIP HOP:

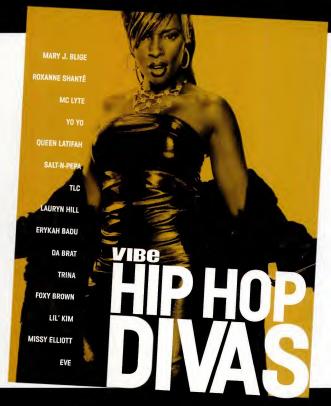
True to his image, Uncle Luke speaks from his gut his opinions are as uncensored as his videos. Check out vibe.com to find out what the sex-a-fied veteran has to say about retring from music, his work in the adult enter tainment industry, and why Young Jeezy's his favorite rapper.



WRITE TO VIRE

Please send letters to VIBE MAIL, 215 Lexington Avenue, 6th Floor, New York, NY10016, or e-mail vibe@vibe.com. Include your full name, address, and daytime phone number. Letters may be edited for length and clarity.

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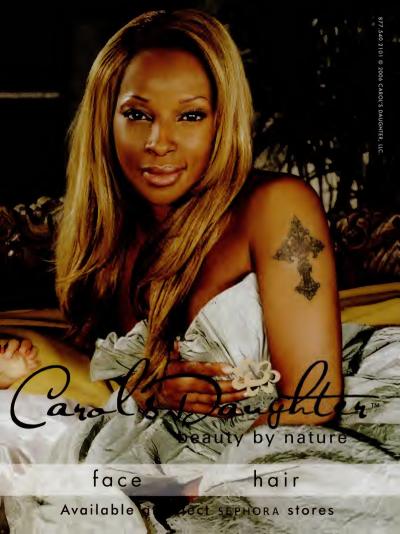
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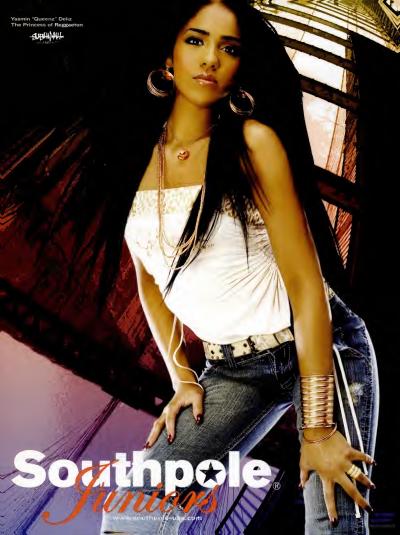




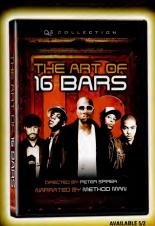


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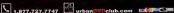


















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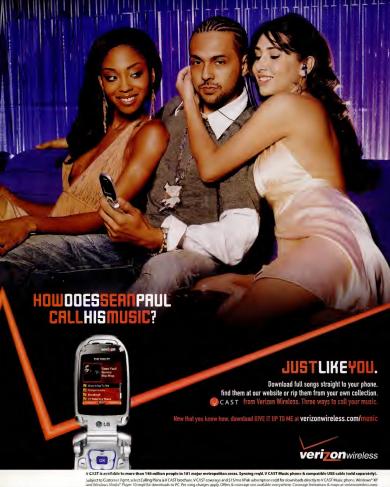


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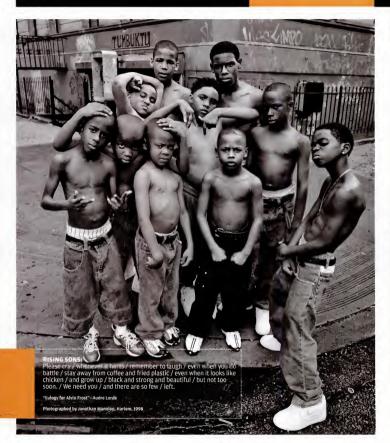
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NEWS / TRENDS / CULTURE / EDITED BY LAURA CHECKOWAY

START



VIBE brings the heat with our guide to this month's best reads. shows, and flicks.

> BOOKS For a guilty pleasure. nick un Wendy Williams's Drama Is Her Middle Name (\$11-Broadway Rooks) the first installment in a series about Ritz

Harper, a radio

proclivity for

DI whose



gossip eventually angers the wrong person.... If you loved Traffic, read Don Winslow's The Power of the Dog (\$15: Vintage Crime/Black Lizard). about the drug wars from the U.S. to Central America.

A.M.A.P.O.E.T.T.O.O.



> THEATER Sarah Jones (above) continues to dazzle in her one-woman Broadway show, Bridge & Tunnel, exploring issues of immigration and tolerance. Visit hroad way com for tickets

> DVDS Crime, secrecy, and sex take center stage in director Carlos Revgadas's Battie in Heaven (\$25: Tartan Video). which explores the double lives of Ana. an upper-class woman, and Marros her chauffeur.... Big

Momma ain't got nothin' on Madea. Watch Tyler Perry's Madea's Family Reunion to find out why. Celia San Miguel

10 THINGS I'VE LEARNED BY SCARFACE

LAST OF A DYING BREED

- I'm a team player, but I prefer to work alone.
 - Hin hon moves around like the globe, Sometimes New York will have a good winter, and Chicago will get it bad. And some summers, L.A. will be hot and Texas won't. That's how music is. The shit just makes a circle.
 - I don't care about no awards. I'm more concerned about making great music.
- Suge Knight's just a big of misunderstood dude. How can a nigga get all that money and still be ruder than the streets? Authorities don't like that shit. I het vou evervone going after him ain't got nothing, so they look to a motherfucker so they can come un.
- I'll never switch up and go mainstream. Under no circumstances.
- We shouldn't separate our music by city or state. You don't hear rock-n-roll bands talking 'bout where they come from, I think it's got a lot to do with keeping black folk segregated.
- If you like my shit, buy it. If you see me, holler at me. Otherwise, I don't give a fuck what nobody say and what nobody think.
- If I wanted to do a composition by Beethoven, I shouldn't be confined to just rap. I want to do some shit with. like, Ozzy Osbourne,
- The only hip hop person I'd like to collabo with is Beanie Sigel. Otherwise, I ain't really trying to do no more rap collabos.
- It's extremely important for me to be around my people. As long as it's not crowded, I'm cool.

SLANGUISTICS



Go dumb: v. Bay Area term for acting disorderly in a public area or party setting. On "Get Stupid," the late Mac Dre details how his crew goes dumb: "Doin' what we want to, hangin' out the sunroof / We mentally ignorant / Boy we go dumb, dude," And on "Get Stupid, Go Dumb," Yukmouth gives the term a thug twist: "Nigga, I'm swiggin' my shit, you shakin' your dreads, get stupid / I'm makin' my bread, I'm shakin' the feds, get dumb,"

"GIVE ME A REAR END



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WITH SOME MEAT ON IT."

22_

right.

The Harley-Davidson' Night Train' isn't for those who like 'em rail thin. We beefed up the hindquarters with a 200mm rear tire. But we didn't stop there. After more than a century of twisting tron, we know something about making the proportions look right and ride right. So we stretched the bobtail fender to fit the wide slab of rubber, Gave it a buxom Fat Bob't tank. And raked the front. Get an eyelul of all our well-embowed Softail' models at your dealer. Find one at 1-800-1482 185 or www.harley-davidson.com. ITS TIME TO RIDE.



BOBBITO PLAYS THE TRACKS. 8 BALL AND MJG STATE THE FACTS.

Bail and MJG stay on the grind. The Memphisbred crew has been putting in work for almost two decades now, starting in the South's burgeoning rap scene. then becoming regional legends, and ultimately garnering support nationwide. They're some of the funniest cats I've ever met, but their untitled sophomore Bad Boy South release, due this summer, is no joke.



M: Familiar heat. 8: Classic Three 6!

B: Having grown up in New York. it wasn't until recently that I started hearing some of the South's bigger names.

8: The majority of hip hop has been New York-y'all had it on lock since day one. You influenced everybody. We all the same people, just that the South has a different culture.

> N.W.A-"Gangsta Gangsta"

ing in high school when we

make our own beats.

loved N.W.A1

started to get in the studio and

8: That's good memories. We

B: I imagine Ice-T, N.W.A, and Geto Boys' collective success

(1988)M: That's what we were bumpmust've shown a lot of cats around the country that you could get on without being from New York. 8: And cats wouldn't even make

a song like "F--- tha Police" until N.W.A had the heart. M: Their impact was that you didn't have to be from the

> LL Cool J-"Jack The Ripper"

(1988)

8: That was my shit! M: It's funny you played that, cause the first record we ever did, in '91, we used his line, "You can roll me up and puff me," in our chorus. The song title was "Lyrics of a Pimp." That was our first official record in stores. 8: We took it to DJ Jackson Brown. and he played it on the call-in radio show. The listeners were feeling it, so he kept playing it for five more months.

B: The BOB intro is my favorite use of that drum machine ever. I'll recognize the song before L even starts rhyming!

8: LL was a big rhyme influence for mo

> Simply Red-"Holding Back The Years" (1985)

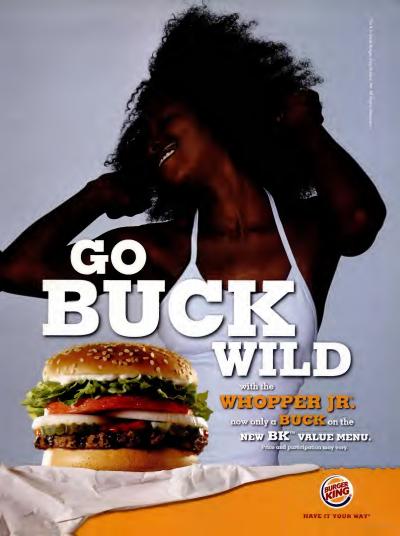
M: I see you been doing your homework! We sampled this for a song later in our career. 8: We were making a transition from Memphis to Houston with Suave House Records. M: When hip hop first started hitting hard, it was all disco





East Coast.









CLICKETY-CLANK: Juan Madrid keeps royalties rolling in by...







Setting up collabos for his clients...
 Going over contracts with lawyers...
 S. Checking out new muslc...
 Meeting with aspiring artists in search of the next big thing...
 And heading to the studio to hear his artist's latest have a search of the next big thing...
 And heading to the studio to hear his artist's latest have a search of the next big thing...

PAID IN FULL

PUBLISHING A&R Juan Madrid strikes profitable deals for his artists that translate into steady royalty checks.

From the Beatles to the LOX, musicians have been getting jacked for their publishing for years. After all, publishing, the music biz term for song ownership, is one of the industry's main treasure troves. Anytime a song is sold, played on the radio, or used in a movie, video game, TV commercial, or ingtone, the owner of the publishing rights cashes in. Which is why artists who are relieved of their rights by unscrupulous managers or labels are almost always left with a lighter wallet and a Styles P-sized grudge. Twenty-eight-year-old Juan Madrid, urban A&R manager at Sony Music Publishing, brings in close to six figures a year signing new producers, songwiters, and artists like the Track Masters, Lyfe Jennings, and Saigon—and helping them understand how ownership equals hefty pockets.

> CLIMBING UP THE RANKS:

While at Momouth University, I interned at Def Jam for a year and at intersope for another year. After it gradulated, I got a job as a substitute teacher. The person loriginally interned for at Inter-scope was managing an artist, and the publishing A&R that had signed him, Deete Komsend, was looking for an assistant, vient to one interview, two interviews, three interviews for a \$25,000 a year 500 is got the job. Ada R department from New York to Los Angeles. I wasn't an executives on they werent rolling out the red carpet and relocating me, and I only had \$1,500 in the bank, but I did it, I was in L.A. for two years and ultimately got a job at 8th, a performing rights organization. And then, last October, I got a call from Sony Music Publishing. After three years of grinding, here I am.

> HATE IT OR LOVE IT-THE PROS AND CONS:

Record company A&R jobs come with a lot of pressure—you're signing and developing artists, and if those projects don't work out, you could lose your job. On the publishing end, we have more room for error. The worst part is we work a lot of hours—we're in the studio until 2 or 3 in the morning—and there's a lot of thout, which means time spent away from family. You have to learn how to manage both.

> HOW ARTISTS CAN AVOID GETTING JERKED:

Knowledge Is key, Young kids often sign something they don't understand and wind up siging away their publishing rights to a company or individual who then reaps the benefits of their hard work. Also, owning the majority of your material Is the most lucrative thing you can do. If you're a producer and all you do is sample, it doesn't make sense for us to sign you because there's no money to be made.

> GETTING IN THE GAME:

Check out books like The Plain and Simple Guide to Music Publishing and Music Publishing. The Real Road of Music Business Success. The Music Publishers' Association Web site has a directory, mpa.org/directories/music-publishers, which is a good resource for you to start making some cold calls for a job or internship. internships are a great way to get in the door. You have to be driven, but not afraid to fall. Fallur is a part of life. It's thow you deal with adversity that separates those who are successful from those who aren't. Alex Gale



GET FRESH BREATH, GET BIG RED.

STARR POWER

After conquering the '80s freestyle scene, BRENDA K. STARR delved into Latin music, earning the title "The Diva of Salsa."

At age 1.3. Brenda K. Starr sang an a cappella rendition of "Love on A Two-Way Street" for Harry Belafonte during a casting call for Beat Street at the Roxy roller rink in New York. With Belafonte's cosign, the half-Israell, half-Puerto Richas singer soon scored a deal with Mirage Records. Her eponymous debut album, released in 1982, earned a Grammy nomination and spawned the hir 'Still Believe, "which was re-recorded years later by Starr's former backup singer, Mariah Carey. In the late '90s, Starr reinvented herself as a Latin artist. Five salsa albums later, the 37-year-old mother-of-four continues to record. On Sunday nights, she hosts "Under the Stars With Brenda K. star" on New Yorks kin (DAZ-PM.

introduced Tommy Mottola to Mariah Carey, and I got dropped from Columbia four months later. Tommy said he had to make room for Mariah. I was devastated. I went from touring and having No. 1 records to saying, Okay, now what? Thank God I kept my chin up and someone gave me a deal in Latin music.

José Armand Jr., the head of Platano Records, said, "Why don't you try salsa?" It was something my mother always wanted me to do, so it was like giving back to her. It was challenging myself because I spoke Spanglish growing up, and I had to really learn the language. One time, when I was recording "Herida" with Humberro Ramirez, I wanted to walk out. I wasn't pronouncing certain words right, and he kept correcting But he said, "You're not gonna give up." He wouldn't let me doubt myself.

Mariah is the godmother of my 16-year-old daughter, Kayla. We were close friends for many years, and she told me that she recorded "I Still Believe" as a tribute to me.

We had a falling out last year, because she wouldn't come to my radio show, and I felt like she was telling me to go through her people. Because of that disagreement, she pulled herself out of the loop—that's the way some people are. But I did call to congratulate her for the success she's had this past year. I hope our relationship can be salvased someday.

I think a lot of my achievements have come because I've been pressing on. I was let down that my last album. Attitute A Okni-

"I went from touring and having No. 1 records to saying, Okay, now what?"

darme, didn't do that well, but timing was a big factor-reggaetón was so huge it hindered my chances. Reggaetón is great, but it's not my style. And why should I have to follow everyone else? Now salsa's starting to come back, so this may be my chance to deliver an album that gets the recognition it deserves.

ion it deserves. Celia San Miguel





Every Civic before it will now be mentioned after N.

The new 2006 Honda Civic Si.

The long recognized nace car for the entire tuner movement.

And the starting point for the next generation.

HONDA

Some custom vehicles shown use non-Honda Genuine parts that may affect manufacturer's warranties or vehicle performance bonds early control of the control o

GAMERS' HAVEN

OK you game heads, Vibe has partnered with Prima Games, the world's leading publisher of video game strategy guides for thousands the world's hotten console and computer games. You can check us out at Vibe.com/games for Prima's downloadable strategy, previews on upcoming games and other inside gaming info hot off the press.

This month we're going to be your personal guides at the Electronic Entertainment Expo (E³). E³ is the world's largest event exclusively dedicated to showcasing video game-related products. E³ 2006 will be held at the Los Angeles Convention Center from May 10–12.

 ${\sf E}^3$ draws tens of thousands of people to see groundbreaking new technologies and never-before-seen products for computers, video game consoles, handheld systems and the Internet.

Sounds great, right? Well, there is one $snag-E^3$ is a trade event only. That means if you don't work in the game industry, you can't get in. Don't sweat it, though—your friends at Prima Games are going to give you a sneak peek at what will be hot at the show.













ADVERTORIAL

MUST-HAVE GEAR



With V CAST from Verlzon Wireless, you can download music, videos, games and more straight to your phone. With realistic 3-D graphics and vibrant sound, all of the top games come to life and bring you into the heart of the action on your Verlzon Wireless phone.

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Allenware offers a solution for individuals seeking a stylish, all-inone PC that is virtually cable-free, requiring only a single power cord, that is transportable and that seamlessly fits into and work with pre-existing wireless or wired networks. The Area-51 5400 delivers the integrated functionality of a CD player, DVD player, media server, digital video recorder (DVR) and more, all in a sleek package.

MUST-SEE GAMES







MADDEN NEL 02





Control the running game like never before with Modden NFL 07. For the first time ever, step up as the lead blocker to create a hole, then take control of the tailback and smash through, overpower, or slash away from would-be tackiers as you fight for every yard. Innovative rushing controls give you a game-breaking ground attack featuring ali-new jukes, cutbacks, and the distinct running styles of your favorite backs. Between the tackies or in the open field, run to daylight with Madden NFL 07.

TOM CLANCY'S SPLINTER CELL DOUBLE AGENT"





in this highly anticipated sequel to the 2005 game of the year, Tom Clancy's Splinter Cell Double Agent, play as a double agent for the first time ever. Take on dual roles of covert operative and ruthless terrorist, where your choices of whom to betray and whom to protect actually affect the outcome of your game.

TEST DRIVE UNLIMITED





With the ability for thousands of gamers to play simultaneously. Test Drive Unlimited is M.O.O.R.: Massively Open Online Racing. This is an unprecedented experience for gamers and is the ultimate automotive experience for car and bike enthuslasts. Once in the game, players can visit car and bike dealers to purchase new vehicles or simply take them for a spin. Gamers can then participate in 8-player races, or take vehicles for a drive on over 1,000 miles of Hawaiian roads and pass by thousands of other real players.

MEDAL OF HONOR AIRBORNE





Medol of Honor Airborne is the latest video game from EA's acciaimed Medai of Honor franchise. This is the first game in the Medal of Honor series to be released on next-generation piatforms.

While building on the key tenets of the franchise, including historical accuracy and authenticity. Medoi of Honor Airborne is set to redefine the series by introducing players to an entirely new way of experiencing a WWii FPS-notably the fully interactive Airborne experience.

TOM CLANCY'S RAINBOW SIX®: VEGAS





The stakes are high when the world's most elite counterterrorism unit enters Las Vegas, where over 36.7 million men, women and children visit each year. "Sin City." the home of the famous Las Vegas Strip, flashy hotels, high-rolling casinos and world-famous celebrities, becomes the setting for a terrorist threat of giobai proportions. What happens when one of the world's most famous cities is held hostage by terrorists?

TIMESHIFT





the first-person genre to an entirely different dimension marked by erratic time and unrelenting action. TimeShift transports gamers to a strange yet familiar world where individual rights have been eradicated and a tyrannical leader rules ruthlessly with an iron fist. The unprecedented technology behind TimeShift will give gamers, for the first time, the ability to slow, stop and reverse the flow of time while remaining compietely unaffected.

BATTLEFIELD 2142





The year is 2142, and the dawn of a new ice Age has thrown the world into a panic. The math is simple and brutal: The soil not covered by ice can only feed a fraction of the Earth's population. Some will live. most will die. In Battlefield 2142, players will choose to fight for one of two military superpowers, the European Union or the newly formed Pan-Asian Coalition, in an epic battle for survival. Armed with a devastating arsenal of hi-tech assault rifles, cloaking devices and sentry guns, players will also do battle using some of the most imposing vehicles known to man.

DARK MESSIAH" - MIGHT AND MAGIC®



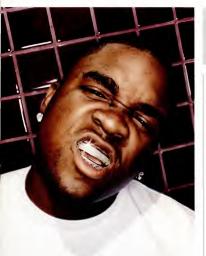


ond Mogic, this masterful combination of intense close combat, powerful sorcery and stealth is a unique and innovative take on first-person action. Challenge the forces of evil in 12 huge levels and learn to master over 30 weapons and a variety of devastating spells. Engage the enemy in intense meiee combat with swords, bows, staffs and daggers. Summon magic powers against the legions of darkness or sneak in the shadows to stalk ferocious creatures. it's heart-pounding action where success In combat will dictate destiny.

F3 WRAP UP

Check back for the E3 Wrap-Up and for more Must-Havesl And if you are serious about blowing your competition away, go now to Vibe.com/games to get that downloadable strategy for games you are playing right now, including The Godfather, Black, Tom Clancy's Ghost Recon Advanced Warfighter, And 1 Streetball, Driver Parallel Lines and more!





FLOSSIN': Mike Jones brings in the Ice Age.

5

MINUTES WITH MIKE JONES

The H-Town rapper insists he has more to offer than his digits.

For Houston's Milke Jones, Jul'n untiln' changed but his change. But considering he sold almost 1.4 million copies of last year's Who is Mike Jones? that's a heliuva lot of change. After getting the whole industry tippin' in '05, Jones is still platiful to the 'you don't work, you don't eat / you don't grind, you don't grind, you don't stind, you don't stind, you don't stind, you don't stind, when the sold about. Lately, the Zis-year-old rapper has been switching fames into other money-making realms, releasing a signature show with Reebox and Lapress time! is in talks for a role in the upcoming film Home of the Brave, starring Samuel Laksoon and 50 cent. With his re-up album, The American Dream, which will be released via his own ice Age Entertainment label, Jones plans to freeze the competition straidh into extinction.

If money didn't matter, what would you be doing? If money didn't matter, there wouldn't be no sense, no definition of grind. There would be no late hours, getting bags under your eyes. I would be at home chillin'. I'd so swimming.

What's the biggest misconception about you? People don't wanna give Mike Jones his respect. I sold 1.4 million. I'm selling more than anybody where I'm from, and people still don't want to give that respect un.

Now that everyone knows your name and number, what will you rap about? A lot of people think all I rap about is my phone number and my name, but my whole thing is I wanted /all to know that I'm not only a rapper, but I'm a cool dude. I'm a motivational speaker. The message Rot across.

Did you really get hit with a \$250,000 phone bill? It was actually like \$120,000 or \$130,000. But I can't say the provider's name 'cause I just got out of it, so part of the deal is for me not to mention the name. Who was your first celebrity crush? Stacey Dash

Do you still have the same phone number? Most definitely. But my lady, she got the special Batline.

After he made a whole CD calling you Dyke Jones, among other things, how did you feel the next time you saw Chamillionalier! it was no big deal. We didn't sit down and talk, but speaking for myself, I grew out of it. I wasn't he one that started the beef, anyway. He was saying some crazy stuff, and he's at gold. I'm at 1.4 million.

What new slang are you introducing in The American Dream? Ice Aee. Whenever somebody says "Ce Aee." that means they got the

game froze up. I got diamonds everywhere. That's what I represent. That's the new slam; "That boy ice Age, man. That boy cold." What were the last books you read? The Kevin Liles book, Make It Happen: The Hip-Hop Generation Guide to Success, Russell Simmons's Life and Def. Sep. Drys, Koney- God. and one of Donald Trump's books. Ltry to listen to people who made it and see if they got game to give out. And I read up on The Art of Wari I rase boys get If with the, you know?

Toshitaka Kondo



EXFOLIATES YOUR SKIN EVERY TIME YOU SHAVE

Venus Vibrance



THE LOST ART

The tour you won't be taking at the Smithsonian.

The Smithsonian Institution is collecting artifacts for an upcoming hip hop exhibit at Washington, D.C.'s National Museum of American History, Although "Hip-Hop Won't Stop: The Beat, The Rhymes, The Life" promise so to be a comprehensive collection, we're certain they won't include items hip hop heads really want to see. Here's some memorable relics we'd have on view.



1. CARMEN BRYAN'S BABY SEAT

Discovered in the backseat of an abandoned Jeep

Although it smelled Downy fresh when found by arche-ho-logists, further forensic analysis revealed DNA evidence linking both rivals-cum-Def-Jam cronies Nas and Jay-Z to the scene. Also uncovered: a No. 3 Sixers headband,

2. PRODIGY'S BALLET SLIPPERS

Onnated by Jav. 7

He built a following with gutter street rhymes, but the rapper first appired to join the Avin's Alley American Dance Theatre. The P struggled to earn back his street cred after decade-old pictures of him clad in dance-class gear were broadcast during MYC's Not 97 Summer Jam concert in 'OI. Ballet critics, however, halled his performance of "Gunclapper Suite" as "enchanting" and "Farsyshnikov-seque."

3. DMX'S COP KIT

Discovered at JFK Airport. Donated by the Port Authority of NY & NJ.

Who knows what Darkman X was thinking when he reportedly impersonated a federal agent in a failed attempt to steal a vehicle. His game of cops and robbers resulted in law enforcement officials confiscating this billy club and set of flashing police lights and sirens.

4. LIL' KIM'S SPRITE CAN

Wanting to score a ne ndorsement deal with Sprite, the Queen Bee bragged about making aluminum cans vanish down her windpipe. We assume she practiced at home and offered to film a commercial displaying her considerable talents, but executives politely declined.

5. JAROBI FROM A TRIBE CALLED QUEST

Discovered: Unknown.
Donated by: Unknown.
Role in Group: Unknown.

6. JA RULE'S SOCK

Donated by Karrine "Superhead" Steffans,

in April 2000, Superhead excavated this souvenir from her L'Erminge Hotel suits after a five-day sexcapade with Ja Rule. Days earlier, rumor had it that hotel guests complained about loud moans coming from the room, not to mention hour-long sessions of "Hotla Holla" on repeat. See the gallery on the lower level for socks collected from Shaq, Kool G Rap, Irv Gottl, Usher, Vin Diesel, Fred Durst, Bill Maher, and the 1997 San Diego Padres.

7. KANYE'S HUMILITY

Donated by Kanye West (along with autographed copies of his VIBE, Rolling Stone, Entertainment Weekly, and Time magazine covers).

Although invisible to those without a sophistlcated eye, this pedestal bears the modest side of the Great Chi-Town Hope, which he Insists is unparalleled in its beauty and power.

Ben Detrick







INFORMANT The 411 on entertainment and culture news.

FILM

Queen Latifah wiji star opposite John Travoita in New Line Cinema's upcoming Hairspray remake, Unlike John Waters's 1988 original starring Ricki Lake, this version will be a musical.... R&B singer Mario is slated to appear in two movies this fall: the drama Freedom Writers, alongside Oscar winner Hilary Swank, and tentatively titled, Music High, a Disney adaptation of Fame Comeback queen Mariah Carey has apparently charmed casting directors into forgetting the Glitter debacle. Carey scored the lead in the upcoming indie flick Tennessee.

which is centered on a waitress who

helps two brothers search for their

LAWSUITS

Mariah Carey

Netly's feeling cheated these days. In papers filed in Manhattan Supreme Court, the rapper is seeking \$33,195 from a high-end car dealership... On February 16, Suge Knight filed a \$106-million countersuit against former partner Michael "Harry-O" Harris, accusing him of conspiracy and attempted extortion, among other charges: Harris's Wife, LVida, won a

estranged father..

\$107 million court judgment against Knight last year. Harris himself is serving a 28-year sentence for drug trafficking and attempted murder.... On March 23, an L.A. judge threatened to take control of Death Row Records...

CRIME AND PUNISHMENT

Cassidy was rejeased from Philadelphia's Curran-Fromhoid Correctional Facility on March 2, after serving an eight-month sentence for involuntary manslaughter.... Facing felony weapons charges in L.A., Master P and his brother, Silkk the Shocker, struck a plea deal on March 13; P was ordered to perform community service, while Silkk was given probation... On February 14, a Brooklyn Supreme Court judge ordered rapper Mos Def to make monthly child support payments of \$10,000 after the rapper had come up short in his payments since the order first went into effect January 1.... On March 11, while in Miami, Young Jeezy was arrested and charged with two counts of carrying a concealed weapon. Police stopped the rapper's vehicle shortly after getting word of an

Jeezy, that ended in gunfire...

Corey (formerly known as "C
Murder") Miller's September 2003 homicide conviction was overturned by the
Louisiana Supreme
Court on March 10.

altercation, allegedly involving

He had been sentenced to life in prison. He will be retried....

DEATHS

Renowned New York skateboarder Harold Hunter (of Kids fame), 31, of a heart attack, according to his brother, February 71, in New York... XClan's Professor X"The Overseer," born Lumumba Carson, son of Civil Rights activist Sonny Carson, of complications from meningitis, March 17, in New York. Pay respect where it's due, sissies!

PAUSE FOR THE CAUSE

> WYCLEF'S YÉLE HAITI

Wanting to rebuild his scarred native land, Wyeler Jean Gunded Wele Haitd in 2004. The nonpolitical organization seeks to flight problems such as chronic miamuritrilion, limited access to education, and substandard health care. Yele helps produced the substandard health produced h

safe sex. Abena Agyeman-Fisher

FOR MORE INFORMATION, call 212-352-0552
or visit yele.org.

Cassidy



His son. His life. His freedom. He's taking them all back. IN THEATRES EVERYWHERE JUNE 23RD FEATURING THE NEW SINGLE BAD GIRLS **BONNIE AND CLYDE - ON THE FLIP SIDE** THE LOWDOWN ON THE DOWN LOW

HIDDEN CAM'RON Inspired by a news segment on pedophiles. Killa Cam has announced plans to release a DVD that exposes child predators lurking on the Internet. How? Cam and his crew will log on, posing as unsuspecting children, and arrange secret meetings. When the kid-loving creeps show up, a camera crew (and Cam himself) will be waiting to expose them.

FRONTIN' On February 18, a Michael Jackson impostor donning white gioves, a surgeon's mask, and sunglasses reportedly duped his way into a Boston charity gaia honoring Gladys Knight, Meanwhile, the real (but nevertheless fake-looking) Jackson was reportedly hiding out in Bahrain.

PARENTS JUST DON'T UNDERSTAND The

New York Daily News ran an article on February 10 exposing the MySpace.com profiles of several celebrity children. Among them were the salacious profiles of Bobby Brown's two teens by Kim Ward. LaPrincia, 16, confessed to streaking and kissing a giri, while Bobby Jr. boasted, "I can read, but I choose not to." Hey, it's your prerogative.

OY VEY! On March 4, the incarcerated artist formerly known as Jamaal "Shyne" Barrow officially changed his name to Moses Michael Levi for personal reasons. Little did we know that Po's great-grandmother was an Ethiopian Jew.

TEACHER'S PET When PETA advocate Pamela Anderson saw Ray J donning an oversized fur coat at London's Kabaret on March 13, the appailed actress gave the singer a lecture on animal cruelty, Ray J saw the light and threw the coat away, vowing to never wear fur again.

ABOUT A BOY While presenting

Kanye West with the International Male Solo Artist honor at the BRIT Awards on February 15, Boy George reportedly commended the Chicago MC for criticizing homophobla in hip hop. "Kanye is the first hip hop star to say something positive about gays," said

the Culture Club alum. Duet anyone?



G.O.O.D. GIRL GONE BAD: Kanveezy's Breezy needs to reboot after getting the boot.

Dear VC confidantes, whether you're hooked on celebrity gossip sites like concreteloop.com or social sites like MySpace.com, your online obsessions are shared by demi-celebs of all sorts. VC recently spotted Ne-Yo's mom and Joe Budden's cousin on MySpace. But what works like a charm for some, can backfire for others-take the young woman who Kanye West was showing off in recent months. The 20-something assistant to an MTV bigwig posted photos of her time in the limelight on her MvSpace page, only to have a slew of cyber-critics swoop down and pick apart every detail of her pics. Rather than brush off the hate flakes. Kanye's girl responded with a page-long tirade about her hot kicks and the Maybach in which she was pictured. VC hears that soon afterward, Kanye broke up with his lady friend. Was MySpace the cause? VC can only speculate

MONKEY BUSINESS

Apparently, the masterminds behind Japanese cult brand A Bathing Ape want to regulate which celebs rock their threads. VC hears that Chris Brown and

the Black Eyed Peas, among other celebs, have requested clothing from the label only to be denied. Apparently, while Lil Wayne and the Beastle Boys are Apeapproved, dancing teenyboppers and hump-loving Peas are not. Allegedly, one such celeb has even taken to rocking fakes on TV as a result....

DONS & DIVAS

VC has already discussed how the one-time queen of righteous realness, Lauryn Hill, has now taken to ultradiva antics (that's Ms. Hill to you!). But as we wait for this almost irrelevant Fugees reunion album, VC hears that not only have fellow members Pras and Wyclef Jean practically given up hope on the project, they're also begrudgingly giving Ms. Hill creative control. And meanwhile, on the other side of indie. VC hears that at a recent concert. MF Doom got positively Lauryn-ish when he ordered that all the other (mind you, reputable) performers clear the hallways and avoid any undue communication when he passed through. The diva strain is airborne! But let's keep that on the hushhush and strictly on the OT.



HANDLES THE SPOTLIGHT AS EASILY AS IT DOES THE ROAD.

Honestly, you could deal without the lights and the crowd of people watching you. Only problem is, they can't seem to deal without you. Whip it is the available voice-assisted navigation system that has them looking. Could it be how effortlessly you back into a perking space using the available rear camera? Or maybe it's the commanding attention from the lion's growl in the form of the most horsepower available in its class (380lp with a VB engine). Whatever it may be, when you drive the all new 2007 redesigned Yukon Denali, you'll have to get used to veryone laving the way you shine.



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FREEZE FRAMES

1. "What's that smell?" A confused DAVE CHAPPELLE wonders at the Block Party premiere at the AMC Loews 34th Street 14 theaters in New York. 2. Gangsta grillz: THE GAME and BIG GIPP keep cold at

a party for Jimmy Henchmen, Ed Lover, and Shakim Compere at Sol in N.Y.C.

3. "Can you be my b-a-b-y?" FABOLOUS asks new Rocawear model ZOE SALDANA at the Reebok event.

4. "So, can I get on the 'Oh Yes' remix or what?" BUSTA RHYMES asks JUELZ SANTANA backstage at the 4th Annual Power 105.1 FM birthday concert at the Nassau Veterans Memorial Coliseum in Uniondale, N.Y.

5. Who's more unpredictable? JAMIE FOXX loses out to **BOBBY BROWN** at a 31st birthday party for Mekhi Phifer in Woodland Hills, Calif.

6. "Just let me spit a verse." TOM CRUISE tells KANYE WEST as the pair discuss Kanye's theme song for M:i:III at the Record Plant in Hollywood, Calif. 7. Every day they're hustlin': PITBULL lets TRICK DADDY and RICK ROSS rub his head for good luck at

Ross's signing party at Opium Garden in Miami. 8. Lean wit' it: DAVID BANNER shows a dumbfounded

E-40 his moves at the after-party for the premiere of Dave Chappelle's Block Party at Eyebeam in N.Y.C. 9. Boys on the side: KELIS teaches ASHANTI how to be

"Bossy" during a Reebok-sponsored party at Marquee in New York City.









She wears it to raise desperately needed funds for HIV/AIDS care services, education and vaccine development. Over half a million people have chosen to wear The Bracelet. What about you? Available at: The Body Shop; Kenneth Cole; Virgin Megastore; Ben Bridge Jewelers and other fine retailers. Or to order call 1-800-88-UNTIL or visit us at WWW.UNTIL.ORG.

urbanworld VIBC READER'S FESTIVAL CHOICE AWARDS

Urbanworld VIBE is giving YOU a chance to get in on the festival action. Vote for your favorite movie, actor, action scene, hottest love scene and more in the Urbanworld VIBE Film Festival Reader's Choice Award. Check out the nominees below and look for the online entry form at VIBE.com. You'll even get a chance to enter your nominee if you don't see it on the list. You're the reader, so it's your choice. Find out how you could win a DVD/CD pack of the hottest films and soundtracks when you enter online.

NOMINEES:



FUNNIEST SIDEKICK (SUPPORTING CHARACTER)

Tyler Perry (Diary of a Mad Black Woman) Larenz Tate (Crash) Mike Epps (The Honeymooners) Chris Rock (The Longest Yard) Your Choice

BEST ACTION FILM



Mr. & Mrs. Smith Batman Begins Kung Fu Hustle Unleashed Sin City Star Wars: Revenge of the Sith

Your Choice HOTTEST ON SCREEN GODDESS



Eva Mendes (Hitch) Joy Bryant (Get Rich or Die Tryin') Christina Milian (Be Cool) Meagan Good (Roll Bounce) Roselyn Sanchez (The Underclassman) Your Choice

BEST ACTOR



Terrence Howard (Crash, Hustle & Flow) Curtis "50 Cent" Jackson (Get Rich or Die Trvin') Samuel L. Jackson (Coach Carter) Chris "Ludacris" Bridges (Crash, Hustle & Flow) Jamie Foxx (Jarhead) Your Choice

ENSEMBLE CAST (BEST CAST)



Rent Hustle & Flow The Gospel Crash Your Choice

REST INDIE FILM



State Property 2 Rize The Gospel Diary of a Mad Black Woman Your Choice

BEST SOUNDTRACK



Hustle & Flow Get Rich or Die Tryin' Roll Rounce Coach Carter Your Choice

The Gospel

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SOUNDTRACK AND

FILM PACK!

BEST FILM (SERIOUS/DRAMA)



Coach Carter Hustle & Flow Crash Four Brothers Get Rich or Die Trvin' Your Choice

BEST FILM (COMEDY)



Diary of a Mad Black Woman Guess Who Are We There Yet? Beauty Shop Kuna Fu Hustle Your Choice

HOTTEST DVD OF THE YEAR (DIRECT TO DVD)



Carlito's Way: Rise to Power The Original 50 Cent Your Choice

BEST DIRECTOR



Thomas Carter (Coach Carter) Robert Rodriguez (Sin City) John Singleton (Four Brothers) Rob Hardy (The Gospel) E Gary Gray (Be Cool) Malcolm Lee (Roll Bounce) Your Choice

BEST FILM OF THE YEAR



Write in your choice for the BEST OVERALL film released in 2005. Your Choice

All nominees are based on films released in the United States in 2005 (calendar year). Nominees are based on top-grossing films directed by a person of color, include prominent person(s) of color in the cast, are films heavily attended by VIBE readers, and/or contain subject matter related to urban culture.





DROPPIN' DIME

VIBE's guide to the 10 THINGS you need to know about this month.



FIFA WORLD CUP GERMANY 2006 What only comes around once every four years and ain't the Olympics? The World Cup, dummy. Tune in as teams from 32 countries kick each other in the balls. (June 9-July 9; fifaworldcup.com)

VOUTURE COM Don't watch me, watch YT. YouTube, that is. Upload, tag, and share videos with the world And don't forget to peep all the ridiculous ish on there, like Gino the Ginny.

(youtube.com)

LOFT CUBE The perfect getaway comes

courtesy of a 24' x 24' steel-framed modular loft dropped on your building's roof via helicopter. It may be ridiculous, but it's oh so fresh. (starting at \$100,000; loftcube.net)



APPLE MACBOOK PRO Apple's first laptop with an Intel chip is faster, thinner, brighter, and comes with built-in iSight and Front Row and a remote control (\$2,000; apple.com)

THE FAST AND THE

FURIOUS: TOKYO DRIFT Japanese car cats have gotten into this thing called "drifting," which is like cruising in permanent fishtail. Now Bow Wow crashes the scene. (June 16th: Universal)

DOONEY & BOURKE COLLECTION FOR GIRLS (starting at \$135: dooney.com)

GENTI EMAN OI LEISURE: A YEAR IN THE LIFE OF A PIME "The term is pimp, but I don't

use it...I'm a professional gentleman of leisure. I have absolutely nothing to do. I stay in bed and take showers.... I could have played first base, run the mile, or become an entertainer, but I was a natural pimp, so I just pursued my talents."-Silky, one of the gentleman profiled in Susan Hall and Bob Adelman's 1972 exposé, reissued this month. (\$35; powerHouse Books)



ED HARDY Tattoo-inspired tees and hats by Christian Audigier are being worn by the who's who of Hollywood...and Ashley Parker Angel, But, hey, they're still hot. (starting at \$55; done dhardy.com)

This exclusive line of T-shirts, shoes, sweatshirts, and hats-created by New York designer Scott Nelson as a tribute to the greatest to ever play the two-is built for those who want to be like Mike, as in fly. (starting at \$24: mike23.com)



THE SPIKE LEE JOINT COLLECTION Do the right thing and pick up this five-film anthology. (\$27:



expir-russian roulette: a game of chance that involves covering and/or ignoring the expiration date on any refrigerated product out of sheer hunger.

-Reprinted with permission from the University of St. Arvin Collegiate Dictionary.





Ask Miss Info

The Hot 97 New York radio personality, talking head, and all-around knowit-all answers your questions about anything and everything. Hit her up at miss.info@vibe.com, and she just may save your ass.

I'm no slouch in the bedroom, but I see other guys buying Viagra pills on the street, and I keep wondering what they could do for me. Aren't those pills for horny old grandpas?

Even fells with functional plumbing are taking erectile dysfunction drugs like Wagra, Levitra, and Calis to fulfill helief Mr. Marcus aspirations. If your ballpark frank has no problems, er, plumpin' when you're cookin', then these drugs can hele you re-up quicker. But at what cost? According to Dr. Brian A. Stone, assistant professor of urology at Columbia University Medical Center, side effects can include headache, stuffy nose, and temporarily bus-linted vision (Heisel). Even worse, overdosing could leave you with priapina, a four-hour-plus erection. Sounds like a real chick magnet, right? Except that it also causes permanent damage—think half-mast for life. That's just not what's up. Can you really buy Manolos and Chanel bags for cheap at sample sales? I am a label ho, but my budget is more final sale than trunk show.

I feel you! I rarely buy anything at full price-I wait for the sample sale. That's when fashion companies sell off showroom samples as well as returned merchandise. overstock, and even pieces that never made it into production. The discount can range from 90 percent off Valentino bags to 30 percent off Chloé pants. How do you get in? According to Minya Quirk, a fashion consultant at Brand Pimps & Media Whores, "Industry insiders and fashion editors get first dibs during the invite-only preview days, but then it's open season. For listings, check out Daily Candy.com or sign up for multilabel sales at BillionDollar Babes.com." Quirk says, however, some lines are so hot there's nothing extra to sell. And I hear a rumor that at Chanel any samples left over are burned to avoid possible bootlegging! That's a crime against humanity.

I'm looking to break into the music biz—not as an artist, but behind the scenes. I keep hearing about A&Rs. What exactly do they do, and how do I become one?

It's nice to see someone who doesn't want to be America's Next Top MC. Some A&Rs focus on finding new artists for labels. so they scout out talent at amateur showcases, Other A&Rs are locked in the studio overseeing recording sessions. And some A&Rs are just glorified babysitters. But the more you know about the music industry, the more valuable you'll be. "You have to keep your Rolodex tight," says D. Prosper, director of A&R for G Unit Records, noting that aspiring A&Rs must also diversify their skill set, "Intern at a label to learn the business, intern at a studio to learn the technical stuff, and listen to all kinds of music," he says. "If you really love hip hop, you know that it's just pieces of everything together. That's why I've got Radiohead and SO Cent on my iPod."













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POPPIN' MY WHITE COLLAR

With so many companies offering the basics, picking the right white tee ain't always so simple. VIBE hollers at DEM FRANCHIZE BOYZ, aka Dem White Tee Boyz, to get the dirt on keeping your look clean this summer.







>2(X)IST LUXE CREW-NECK TEE

(\$29: 2xist.com)

51% cotton, 49% micro-modal; sizing up to XL

THE FIT: Pimpin': This is for a body builder. It's

kind of silky and fits tight on you. You wear this to show off your muscles. Jizzal Man: But if you wash it, it may turn into a little shirt you put on your

child's doll.

Jizzai Man: Feels good, like something my old lady would wear to bed. I definitely wouldn't wear it. Not even around the house.

ROCK WIT' IT?

Parlae: Naw, it reminds me of draws.

> AMERICAN APPAREL FINE JERSEY SHORT SLEEVE TEE

(\$15; americanappareistore.com) 100% jersey cotton; sizing up to 3XL

Buddle: It's too short. It's gotta be long and tall 'cause our pants be hanging off our behinds, so something gotta cover that up.

THE FEEL:

Pariae: Too thin. As soon as you sweat, your collar's gonna shrivel up. With thicker tees, your collar will still stand up like you just got it.

ROCK WIT' IT? Parlae: They don't make 'em big

enough. Even the 3XL is too small.

> HANES CLASSICS CREWNECK TEE (\$10 for 3 pack; hanes.com)

100% cotton; sizing up to XL
THE FIT:
Jizzai Man: We don't get our T-shirts in
packs. If it's in a pack, it's too small, We

don't get anything but tank tops in packs.

THE FEEL:

Buddle: These are for one-day use only, maybe two days. But after that second day, it gotta be gone because once you wash it, it's an undershirt.

ROCK WIT' IT?

Pariae: This ain't my cup of tea, but I'd wear it to bed.

>FINISH LINE 365 TALL TEE (\$10; finishline.com)

100% cotton; sizing up to 5XL

THE FIT:

Buddie: We prefer this brand 'cause they make tall tees in extra-large sizes. Jizzai Man: I wear like a 5X in this. It

gotta slang over your pockets where the stacks be. THE FEEL:

Buddle: This one's thick, so you know it's quality. When you start sweating and you can see your skin or undershirt, those are the cheap ones.

ROCK WIT' IT?

Buddle: The Finish Line is definitely on point. They have tall tees with thickness. Saptosa Foster

> THE WHITE TEES DFB WILL BE ROCKING: "Right now we like them thick tees by Finish Line, Foot Locker, or Champs. You can wear 'em for like two days, and they're long and cover our pockets, just how we like them. But we got our own line coming out, DFB Tees, and then we'll be wearing those," says Parlae.





Miles Away from Ordinary

© 2006 The Gembrinus Company, San Antonio, TX 78232

Committee of the last

THE LENS To this day, the brand's Aviators continue to carry the original G-15 lens, an antiglare cut of glass that provides 100 percent UV protection while staying true to (and even intensifying) most colors seen by the naked eye. Even better, they're impact and scratch resistant, so you can throw 'em around all you want and still live to see tomorrow.

THE BRAND Ray-Ban is the Aviator and has been for a while. Back in the 1930s, as the lines were being drawn for the coming world war, the U.S. Navy Air Corps contracted o.g. lens crafters Bausch & Lomb to hook up some shades for American pilots, who needed something that could block the sun without blocking their sight. B&L came through with a series of goggles that evolved into a simpler set of lightweight sunglasses. In 1937, the company took the Aviator look commercial under the name Ray-Ban (get it?-ray ban). And when the caca hit the fan in 1941, the eagle eyes peering through those Ray-Bans began alming their weapons at the original Axis of Evilespecially Nazi Germany and Imperial Japan. The mystique never faded. In 1999, B&L sold the biz to Italian eye glant Luxottica Group (the folks behind Lenscrafters and the Sunglass Hut, among other things), but the look remains the same. EXHIBIT A THE STYLE Along with Ray-Ban's Wayfarer style (the heavy black-on-black joints made famous by Tom Cruise in Risky Business and the whole gang in Reservoir Dogs), the Aviators are among the most imitated make of sunglasses ever crafted. With Ray-Ban offering an easy-onthe-pocket price of \$100 a pop and new color options-including copper, lead, black, and toneon-tone-why not go for the original shades while you're shining this summer? Rajni Lucienne Jacques

80 VIB6

Photograph by STEVE COHEN

CERTIFIED CLASSIC



IN STORES SOON

1. Green sunglasses with buckle detail by Gucd (\$290; neimanmarcus.com).
2. Brown large-framed sunglasses by Chanel (\$315; 800-550-0005). 3. Pink round sunglasses by Dolce & Gabbana (\$265; sunglasshut.com).





















GEAR

MADE IN THE SHADE

This summer, try wearing sunglasses that bring out your inner rock star.



ARE AND MAKEUP BY BRYAN LYNDE FOR RJ BENNETT REPRESENTS; PURPLE TANK TOP BY



the products they use to maintain their star appeal. It's not easy to STAY CAMERA-READY, but for these artists, it's all part of the job. Here's a sample of



· Cetaphil Facial Cleanser · Victoria's Secret Garden

Collection Love Spell Body Butter • Kenneth Cole New York Black Perfume (\$49: kennethrole.com). "It lasts the longest, and I've gotten the most compliments from it."

- BROOKE VALENTINE · OPI Nail Polish in Bubble Bath · Redken All Soft Shampoo and Conditioner M.A.C Hyper Real Foundation (\$26; maccosmetics.com). "I love anything M.A.C. The makeup is perfect for me, and the Hyper Real works as a





· Jaguar Cologne · L'Occitane Dry Skin Body Lotion · GNC Men's Mega Men (\$17;

gnc.com). "It gives me the daily nutrients that I need and keeps my energy up for my busy schedule."



DONELL JONES . Tend Skin Shaving Cream • Neutrogena Deep Clean Foaming Scrub · Bylgari Pour Homme Cologne (\$84; sephora.com). "I've been using it for eight years, and the ladies love it."

M-1 (of dead prez) -• Burt's Bees Lip Balm • Carol's Daughter Hand Cream · Kiehi's Pineapple Papaya Facial Scrub (\$25: kiehls.com). "I just can't live without it." Rajni Lucienne Jacques

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Have a happy period. Aways.



OLD-SCHOOL COOL

Back in the day, shell toes were an essential part of New York's hip hop uniform. That's what adidas had in mind when they created these limitededition adicolor kicks, Each pair's design is based on one of the city's five boroughs. Get your B-boy/B-girl on-boom box optional. By Beverly Smith

HOW TO COMPLETE THE LOOK:

You can also rep your borough of choice with an adicolor track jacket, which features some incredible murals. Or maybe put Queens on your feet and Brooklyn on your back-a salute to Jay and Nas reconciling!

Rock the bells with a Kangol. Channel your inner Grandmaster Flash with a SO4 Ventair cap (kangolstore.com).

Pay homage to the best of the '80s with H&M's "Sliq" jeans. With their slim cut and cool wash, you'll stay fresh to death (hm.com).

II WHERE TO WEAR THEM:

Be the coolest one onboard Tom Joyner's Fantastic Voyage 2006. This eight-day cruise, from Miami to several spots in the Caribbean, features scheduled performances by Bobby Brown, Wanda Sykes, and Teena Marie (blackamericaweb.com).

You positively can't miss the Brooklyn Hip Hop Festival, taking place on June 24, All four elements of the culture will be represented (brooklynbodega.com).

Show all those new jacks how real O.G.s do it at the 6th Annual BET Awards in Los Angeles. The show is on June 27, but the parties start days before.

COP 'EM: adicolor Bill McMullen for Foot Locker sneaker (\$80; footlocker.com).

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Konne We Kanye West

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TRUE BLUE

This summer, be happy about getting the blues: Try lightweight denim, stylized sweats, and bold timepieces.





Get caught reading.

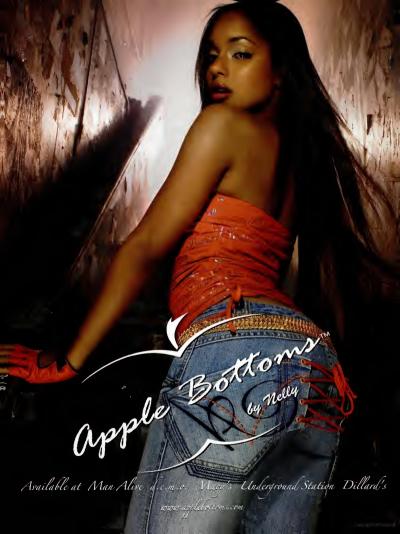
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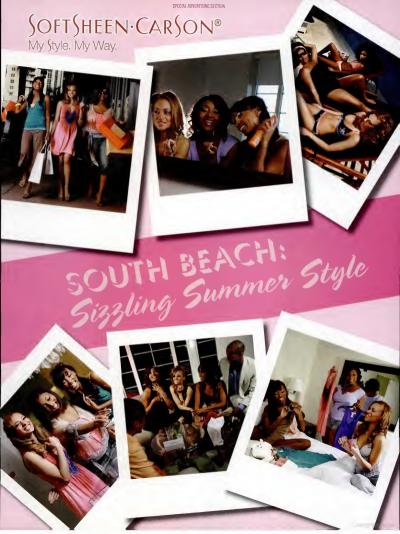
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Americae Publishora, he

George Foreman Gets Caught Reading.











Toccara's Haute Hollywood Look: Relax hair with Dark and Lovely Relaxer with Moisture Seal Technology. After relaxing, apply Dark and Lovely Color Flash Vibrant Color Mousse in Orange Candy. Wait 20 minutes and rinse color from hair until water runs clear. Towel dry hair; apply Let's Jam Heat Styles Smoothing Balm and blow dry hair. Apply Optimum Oil Therapy Hair and Scalp Quencher to dry hair. Section front piece of hair creating long bang, flat iron bang creating side swept look. Brush sides and back of hair up in a French roll chignon updo. Apply Let's Jam Conditioning Gel to updo to hold style in

place, secure updo with hair pins. Tie colorful scarf around hair.



Bre's Uptown Diva Look:

Shampoo hair with Dark and Lovely 3-n-1 Conditioning Shampoo. Apply Dark and Lovely Color Flash Vibrant Color Mousse in Red Pop. Rinse color from hair until water runs clear (DO NOT CONDITION). Towe dry hair: Apply Dark and Lovely Moisture Seal Leave-in Styling Mist to damp

hair. Diffuse damp hair with hair dryer, scrunching hair to emphasize natural wave pattern. Lightly apply Dark and Lovely Moisture Seal Daily Oil Moisturizer.



Nik's Conspicuous Curls Look: Apply Hi Rez High Resolution Hair Color in Gold Fusion. Towel dry

hair, Apply Let's Jam Heat Styles Set and Wrap Lotion to damp hair. Roller set hair on medium to large size rollers; Dry hair under hair dryer for 1-2 hours. Lightly loosen curls with fingers creating large cascading ringlets, Lightly apply Optimum Oil Therapy 3-n-1 Crème Oil Moisturizer.







Club Couture

Nik's Sideswept Vixen Look: Shampoo and condition hair with Optimus Oil Therapy Ultimete Therapy Shampoo and Conditioner. Towel dry hair; Apply Let's Jam Heat Styles Smoothing Belm and blow dry hair. Section hair in small parts and lightly spray Let's Jam Heat Styles Curling Spray to each section. Use a small barrel curling iron and spiral curl entire head. Separate curls lightly with fingers but maintain tight curl pattern. Lightly apply Optimum Oil Therapy 3-n-1 Crème Oil Moisturizer; brush curls up on one side and secure with decorative pin.











Toccara's Wicked Waves Look: Shampoo and condition hair with Dark and Lovely 3-n-1 Moisture Seal Conditioning Shampeo and Moisture Seal Deep Conditioner. Towal dry hair; Apply Let's Jam Heat Styles Smoothing Belm and blow dry hair. Apply Optimum Oil Therapy 3-n-1 Crème Oil Moisturizer to dry hair. Part hair on side and curl using a madium to large barrel curling iron creating soft waves. Rake through curls with a large comb fluffing curls with your hand as your rake. Finish your look with Optimum Oil Therapy Shine Booster.









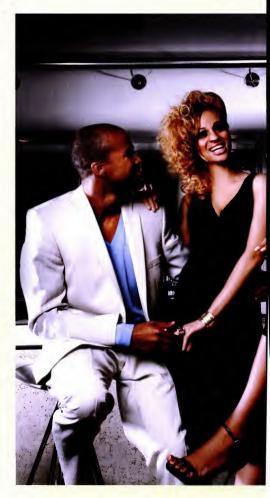
Bre's Tantalizing Tresses Look: Shampoo hair with Dark and Lovely 3-n-1 Moisture Seal Conditioning Shampoo and Moisture Seal Instant Conditioner, Apply Dark and Lovely Moisture Seal Leave-in Styling Mist to damp hair and blow dry. Apply Let's Jam Heat Styles Straightening Cream and flat iron hair straight. Smooth hair and control frizz with a small dollop of Optimum Oil Therapy Shine Booster. Spray Let's Jam Heat Styles Curling Spray on hair and use a large barrel curling iron to create loosa waves at ends of hair. Pull hair up in the back into a loose ponytail with front bangs and loose curl tendrils in the back













Where to Buy SOFTSHEEN CARSON Products















NATIONAL RETAILERS

Wal-Mart Target Walgreens Sally Beauty Supply

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Angie's Beauty Supply 1153 Ralph Oavid Abemathy Blvd Atlanta

Hair Depot 2944 Deans Bridge Road Augusta

King Beauty Supply 610 North Avenue Macon

IHINOIS

Chatham Beauty Supply 112 E. 87th Street 1637 E. 95th Street Chicago

Beauty One Beauty Supply 125 E. 87th Street Chicago

KANSAS

Bunny's Beauaty Supply 38th & State Kansas City

MARYLAND

Liberty Beauty 7019 Liberty Road Laurel

MICHIGAN

US HairCare Fairlane Mall Detroit

MISSOURI

Nu Fashion Beauty Supply 10835 Old Halls Ferry Rd. St. Louis

NORTH CAROLINA

Universal Beauty Supply 125 E. Independence Charlotte

Beauty World 1408 Avondale Drive Durham

NEW YORK

Flatbush Beauty Supply 1001 Flatbush Avenue Brooklyn

Feel Beauty Supply 160-11 Jamaica Avenue Jamaica

Feel Beauty Supply 1403 Saint Nicholas Avenue New York

OHIO

Longwood Beauty Supply 2605 Noble Road Cleveland Hts.

PENNSYIVANIA House of Beauty 2385 Cheltenham Avenue Philadelphia

SOUTH CAROLINA

Kings Beauty Supply 6432-J Two Notch Road

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Ebony Beauty Supply 7125 S. Polk Street

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Best Beauty Supply 5086 Griggs Rd. 12620 Woodforest Rd. 13300 Homestead Rd. Houston

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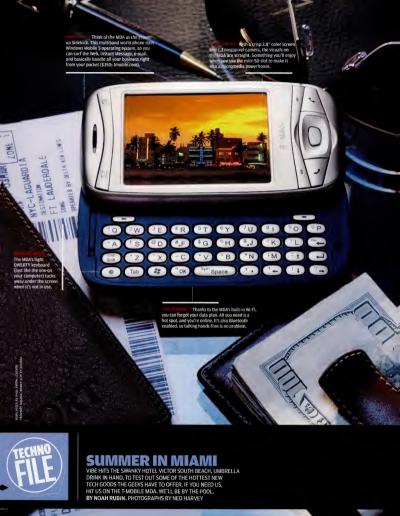
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PIDMETR AVIC-21 HEAD UNIT (\$2.250) Indirecenter ordisc comp. The new AVIC offers everything from a 7" tools to screen that unit-comp. The new AVIC offers everything from a 7" tools from

2. HARMAN/KARDON DRIVE +

if you really want to bump that make to collection in your 60GB index, collection in your 60GB index, and harman/kardon's Drive - Play to the mix. The dashboard-mounted screen takes navigation cues from your iPod 50 you can jump from Lil Wayne's "Money on My Mind" to Rick Ross's "Hustlin" without missing a beat, even with the 60-gig tucked in the glove box.

3. XACT VISOR

S 130

Isody accommander and is the shift, but getting it into the ride can be a bitch. Fortunately, this convenient Sirius receive features a 6-character display, ordary control knob, 36 channel prosests, and built-universes. Put ransmitter and can be easily mounted in your sun visor or on your winshield, dash, or amp plate. No disassembly required.

4. DAVIN WHEELS TOTAL CUSTOMIZATION SYSTEM

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You know the ride ain't fly null
you lose those stock rims, so hit
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custom shoes for those feet.
Davin's TCS system lets you pick
from a variety of colors to trick
out any of their Revolution 2.0
and Speed collection rims your
way, as in the right way. More
collections on deck.

S. CLIFFORD INTELLIGUARD 990X 2-WAY SECURITY SYSTEM (\$830; clifford.com)

Know what happens when your car's fresh? Someone tries to take it. With the intelliguard 990X; 2 May 65 in the whin, your can use the advanced remote control to keep tables from up to a mile away, And with the 990X; Blackkax anti-carjacking system and dual sensors—Omnifisensor and remotely adjustable promiting sensor—you can rest assured that the only one touching your ride will be the valet.



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HOW YOU LIVIN'?

GADGETS TO MAKE WHEREVER YOU STAY

1. THE SLINGBOX

Sure, the slingbox ann't the freshest looking gizmo on the market, but it's damn cool. Hook it up and watch your favorite TV. satellite, OVR, or TiVo-ed content on any device with Internet access. Put simply, this, plus a laptop and an internet connection equals never missing your Favorite shows, even when you're out on the grind.

2. DELL XPS MOBILE

(109) eut.com)
Ilmiss you're a computer dude, when it comes to desktops, there aren't too many things to get too excited about. But with multimedia desktop power tucked into a mobile package, the XPS gives you everything you need-from dual-core processors to a 20.1" widescreen, eight integrated speakers and subwoofer, as well as a Webcam package that looks good on the road or at home.

2. PAMASONIC LOX²¹ LOBOP PDP (TSDP) panasonic Loxi)
What better way to make sure your home's a costlet than with this king-size versen from Panasonic? At 103°, it's the largest plasma on the market and the LOBOP resolution ensures it's also crystal clear.
Alight, it will probably be crazy expensive and not even close to practical, but just imagine watching the Godfather on this bad boy, it just may be worth the price on its head.

4. SONY BDP-SI AND TOSHIBA HD-XAI

(\$1.000; sonystyle.com, \$80

So here's the news: Your DVD player is a wrap, And who knows which new platform is going to become standard—Sony's flagstrip Bib-ray player gives you 1080p output and supports SOGB discs: Toshiba's H0-DVD player provides 720p or 1080 output, can up-convert your old OVDs to bi-def, and offers a range of Duby audo formats (Oigita), Digital Plus. True HD, OTS, and DTS-HD). Cop both while they figure it out.

S. PHILIPS HTSOBOOW (5809-childusta.cam) Fortunately, Philips delivers a home theater in a box that's light years ahead of those joints flooding the shelves at Kmart. Rocking HOM connectivity, compatibility with almost every disk you can find, plusmountable roar speakers, this true surround system has the looks true surround system has the looks to match the performance. Now all you need is that big-ass TV.



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GAME PLAN

1. URBAN CHAOS: RIOT RESPONSE

The sick thing about games is that, well, they're sick. Like this firstperson shooter in which you play as Nick Mason, a member of an elite counter-gang unit working to take out terrorists who are plotting to attack an unspecified U.S. city. There's blood, drama, and a sense of impending dread. Best of all, it ain't real, so play on, playboy. (Xbox, PS2)

2. SPY HUNTER: NOWHERE TO RUN

Tricked-out car, bad guys, secret weapons, racing, oil slicks...what more did an '80s game need? Well, 23 years and five games later (including a pinball version), Spy Hunter is back, with a twist. In Nowhere to Run, you can still exercise a little road rage, but you can also get out of the car and beat that ass. Sounds like a hit. Watch out for the film, starring the Rock, coming soon. (Xbox, PS2)

3. YAKUZA

Here's the deal: the Yakuza are some of the most badass MFs on the planet, known for being hard-boiled killers with an amazingly high pain threshold. Set on Tokyo's streets, this game's already a massive hit in Japan. Pick it up when it hits shelves stateside, and see what it's like to get Japanese gangsta with it without losing a pinky. (PS2)

4. ROCKSTAR GAMES PRESENTS TABLE TENNIS

When it comes to sports video games, we play by one rule: If the real thing ain't on TV, It ain't for us. But the folks behind Grand Theft Auto don't give a damn. So we haven't seen a ping pong match on-screen since Forest Gump, but know this, Table Tennis is fast, competitive, highly addictive, and above all,

Movie games generally suck. Fortunately, Activision don't get down like that (if you never played Spider-Man, go get it now). X-Men: TOMG is the bridge between the movies X2: X-Men United and X-Men: The Last Stand, so play as Wolverine, Nightcrawler, and the young Bobby Drake (Iceman) and get to the bottom of that whole Last Stand thing. Or just chop some fools up and call it a day. (Xbox 360, PS2, GameCube, PC, PSP)







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TOTIN' HEAT

CALISE VOU GOTTA HAVE

1. FLYBOOK LAPTOP

(\$3,000; f/ybook.biz) This uitrasmail, feature-packed iaptop will keep you in the loop thanks to its tri-band, hands-free GPRS phone and Wi-Fi and Bluetooth connectivity—just pop in your data plan-enabled ceii's SIM card. oata pian-enapied ceirs sim caro, and you can get online anywhere your phone gets service. And don't forget the 8.9" touchscreen that can be flipped and folded back, turning PC. And the available color schemes are oh so fresh.

2. CANON POWERSHOT CAMERA **SD430 WIRELESS**

(\$500: canon.com) Impress your folks this year when you use this five-megapixel, 3x optical zoom digital camera to show off your summer abroad since the SD430 can transfer flicks to your computer via Wi-Fi. Well, that's the kind of trick that'ii make a trip to the john look impressive.

3. SONY READER

Three things you should always have with you at the pool (four, if you count the latest VIBE): a drink, an object of desire, and a book-or thanks to Sony's Reader, a thousand books. Sony's even set up an online store (think iTunes for books) offering thousands of titles for less than the retail price, so you can stack paper, not books.

4. JABRA JX10

Here's the bad news-when you wear one of those Biuetooth headsets, you look like something out of Star Trek, The good newsthe JX10 is the sleekest model on the market and delivers crystalclear sound. It's even won a few design awards. We understand wireless headsets are useful. Just do us a favor and use one that doesn't make you look like a tool.

S. 4GB SAMSUNG YP-25

Yeah, Apple has the mp3 player game on smash, but that doesn't mean you have to go iPod just to get your music to go. Case in point, Samsung's YP-ZS, a sleek, compact alternative to the norm available in two colors (black and silver) and sizes (the 2GB model will save you a Grant). And with a color screen that can show off your flicks and a 30-hour battery life-roughly double that of iPod's Nano-you'll be too busy bumping tracks to think, different or otherwise.







NEXT



hree days of sunshine have all but, dissipated the remains of New York City's worst snowstorm on record. And here in Diddy's Staned Daddy's House recording studio, Cherl Dennis's cheerful demenant seems to brighten the already luminous day. Even while dismissing her label's motor Journ's vanishing roster, she's all smiles. "I know all the things that come with the business," says the buseoning R&B singer," (can't let that didtate how I most didtate how I most.)

Dennis, 24, has to saly sharp right now. As da Gaby, first cool female release since Falth Exans, she's part of the misson to restore the label's glory days. Sens, 112, and the LOX are just a few who, citing neglect and indifference, field for greener pastures. But Dennis isn't worried about being ignored. "People will only overlook you if you let them," she says with a slight vet endearing lips." Wou can complain afall into the background, or you can make them pay attention."

Dennis has been demanding the limitelight since she was 8 years old, wailing in her grandma's church choir. You've probably heard the rifesty vocats on the Making the Band 3 theme. "Ooh La," or the Bad Boy compliations The Saga Continues. and We Invented the Reniz. After a four-year stifn in the group Spoiled, she got her break on Masses" XIII Ever Wanted." from 1999's Double Up. Way wars later, she officially joined Bad Boy after an impromptu audition for Diddrk at a friend's part.

But while her signing was relatively effortless, Dennis often felt the weight of biddy's imperious ways-like when he stuck her in a brainstorming session with unfamiliar songwriters. "He expected me to jump in and crank out lyrics," she says. "But now the pressure insoliers me."

And with her lighthear ted. untitled debut. Densis hoses to do some inspiring of her own. Her breecy first single, "Low-Vow," featuring, in ones, out as un will be song doesn't lake a strong "F-you" stance, Dennis is sure it will resonate with besong doesn't lake a strong "F-you" stance, Dennis is sure it will resonate with using bedsen't be been jadded by love. "Maybe someone will need my positive perspective," she says, "I'm not about being down and out. Even when I'm talking about pain and betragal, I still find a silver lining." Doesn't it feel good to know some out there does?



CHE'NELLE

ROOTS: Perth, Australia, by way of Malaysia MOMENT OF TRUTH: Signed to Virgin Records in December 2005

FLAVOR: Part R&B, part rhythmic pop with reggae and soca nuances

and soca nuances

COSIGN: "Che' Nelle is a unique and open-minded
talent. And like most foreign artists, she has a
different perspective on what's hip, and that makes
her fresh."—Rich Harrison

uring a leisurely Sunday ride along New York City's FDR Drive, there aren't really that many trees to admire so Aussie visitor Che Neile (born Cheryline Lim) turns her attention to the vast, sienne-colored landscape to her left. "These are the buildings you see in the movies," she says. You explain to her that these are called projects, and suddenly, It all becomes clear. "That's what rappers are talking about." The concludes.

A day spent with Che'Nelle, 22, is filled with such spontaneous remarks, Some, like, "Who's gonna write or produce your stuff if you don't do it vourself?" could be mistaken for naiveté, but they're also endearing. After all, it's the same M.O. of self-sustenance that has brought this singer/ writer/producer stateside-a long way from home. After her family migrated to the isolated city of Perth, Australia, Che'Nelle spent her teen years pub-hopping, singing covers of Top 40 songs as part of a band. Yet something about regurgitating Rod Stewart's "Da Ya Think I'm Sexy?" wasn't fulfilling. so in between gigs, Che'Nelle would hit up underage clubs to indulge in the music she loved; hip hop, R&B, and reggae. Going to college to learn how to produce-with Logic Pro and Pro Tools-was Che'Nelle's next big step toward stardom.

Along the way, though, she hit two major roadlocks: the breakup of a four-year relationship and vocal nodules. The latter, curlously enough, was the result of the former. "I went party-nuts," Che'Nelle confesses. When doctors warned she could lose her voice forever, it forced Che'Nelle to do a 180.

Today, she's got a production deal, a recording contract, and a vibrant debut, tentatively titled things Happen For A Reason, for which she contributed a great deal of writing and some production. The album is about 70 percent rhythmic club numbers, like the socal-icious "I Fell In Love With The D.I." a humorous tale about two-timing, and about 30 percent bedtime stories, like "2nd Nature," where her soft-spoken inflections show a true appreciation for R&B sweetherast like Aallyan.

It's his kind of chameleon-like talent that positions Che'Nelle for success on U.S. soil. What's more, veterans like Rich Harrison and KayGee are devoting some maestro-time to her album. "She can adapt to any track," says her proud production company president Charles Dixon. "She's what you call a universal artist." And there's nothing foreign about that.



KEITE YOUNG

- coroungs in 2002 NVOR: Gospel-influenced funk and soul SIGN: "Kelte is a very energetic young m

eite Young isn't like most R&B singersit's Valentine's Day, yet he'd rather not talk about women or relationships. "Music is my love." says Young, 29, "Let's talk about that instead," Fair enough,

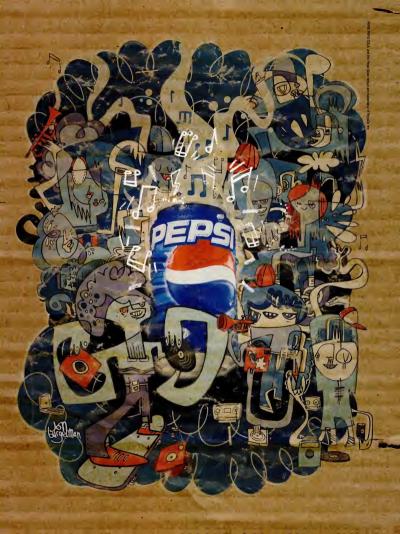
Growing up in a family where his maternal grandfather was a blues singer and mother a member of Kirk Franklin's choir, it's easy to understand Young's affinity for music. But Young (his first name is pronounced "keet") will be the first to tell you music wasn't his primary calling. His deep religious upbringing conflicted with the secular tunes he loved so much. And to begin with, Young turned to the pulpit-he was ordained as a minister at 15before realizing that secularity and spirituality can coexist

After touring with Kirk Franklin's choir in 1997, Young began to blend gospel with funky Inspiration from Prince, Sly, and Stevie. Five years later, Young's soul-stirring fusion of genres caught the ear of his great uncle Waymon Tisdale, the former NBA baller and renowned smooth jazz guitarist, who passed a demo on to Hidden Beach CEO Steve McKeever. Impressed, McKeever signed Young immediately. "I don't compare him to anyone, but I put Keite on a pedestal with those greats like Prince, D'Angelo, and Al Green," says Tisdale. "John Legend paved the way for this kind of music to be popular today, and Keite is the next voice."

Young is motivated to reach his own legendary status with his forthcoming debut. The Rise & Fall of Keite Young. The album deliberately toes that fine line between good and evil. From the uplifting "Pray" to the sultry "The Way You Love Me." Young takes listeners on a lyrical rollercoaster through heaven and hell. "Preachers and pimps have the same oratory gift," he explains, "They have the same ability to incite emotion."

As Young wraps up his sermon on life being a constant battle between the spirit and the flesh, he brings it all full circle: "I like having a conversation that results from music," he says. "By just focusing on music, I can bring together my spiritual side and my sensual side. It's all beautiful, and I hope listeners understand that." Chuuchl Jozen Cummings





SA-RA

ROOTS: Los Angeles and New York City

n 2005

FLAVOIt: Cosmic I

COSIGN: "A lot of Indie rock and white bands have many that's cutting edge. I felt like black music, a lot of times, sounds similar to itself. We need black music that musics the employer."—Kanne West

A disco ball revolves slowly like a planet in the solar system, scattering little illuminated to save prints around a living room in the artists' community of sibre take, lost Angeles, Sa-Ra's (pronounced sah-rah) crit ib ilike a creative clubhouse. There are Arlocentric oil paintings, missing boards, keyboards, drum litis, and heat machlines everywhere. It's a growny take-you-shoes-off kinda place. A spot where the group, a recent addition to Kange West'S G.O.D. Music roster, can feet comfort-able pomitficating on a few of their favorite things: high art. Kengties symbolism, and sent

Which explains the trippy name. According to Tax Arnold, 31, the flamboyant Views-Saint-Laurent-sporting fashionists of the group, Sa-Ra can either mean "child of the cosmoo" or "offspring of the most powerful energy in the universe." Om/Mass Keith, 28, the cerebral one, clarifies: "D define it is to compart-mentalize it in this nonmultidimensional plane that were on. "Staffe Jiusayn, 36, the quietest member, offers no further explanations and simply plays the tracks from their yet-to-be-titled forthorning allbum.

Their must is conceptual, hip hop with ironic references to the '80s-a time when the crack epidemic exploded and Gucti-wearing drug lords roamed the land. More akin to a rock opera than a straightforward hip hop album, Sa-Ra are master teachers on an audio/visual quest to enlighten all of the senses. "It's an III plot," says Keith. "It's too III." in between, you get hip-shaking electro-rap that owes as much of a debt to Vanity 6 as it does the Velvet Underground, It's a quintesentially esosteric sound and definitely not tailor-made for main-stream America.

But this collective wasn't always so far left. Back in the day, while thusan was deejaring with Aladdin and making beats for Ice-T., Arnold was assisting Dr. Dre on L'Ironic 2001, and Keilh spent some time working under Jam Master Jay. They came together as a group in 2000, winning critical acclaim in both Europe and underground hip hop circles for their production and remixes. In 2005, Def Jam and Atlantic, among others, made a bid for Sa-Ra, who ultimately decided to join the hip hop mavericks over at G.O.D.

And they couldn't have picked a better home in their quest to elevate the look and sound of black music. "Pharrell paved the way for Kanye who paved the way for us," says Arnold. "Sa-Ra is a story, and we're at the beginning stages. We're introducing ourselves to the world." Question is, is the world ready for Sa-Ra? Serena Kim



Bad Boy Entertainment & Vibe Magazine

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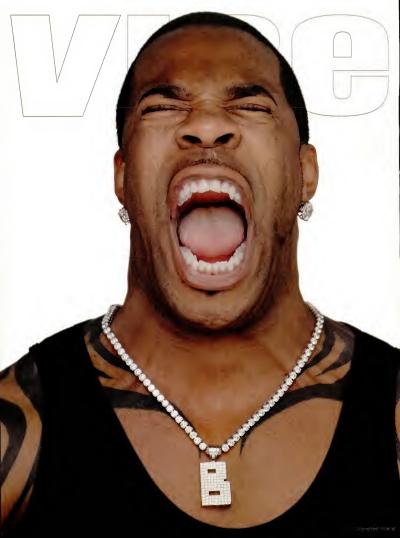
The Greatest Rapper of All-Time His legacy lives on...

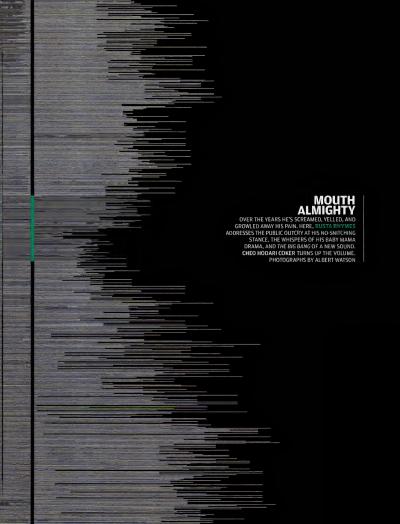




B.I.G. FOREVER







t's a drizzly Friday afternoon in Los Angeles. Workers clock overtime hours in front of the Kodak Theatre, sprucing up the red carpet for the Oscars on Sunday. A few blocks away on the second level of the Hollywood Gym, Busta Rhymes is equally hard at work. He's drenched in sweat as he does an upright row, grunting with every pull of the bar. The dredlocks are gone, and so is his neck. The 90pound weights clang against each other with rhythmic precision as chief-turned-trainer "Big Jay" puts him through paces worthy of an chacker. If Busta takes a lone swip of water and smiles. "When you

security chief-turned-trainer "Big Jay" puts him through paces worthy of an NFL linebacker. // Busta takes a long swig of water and smiles. "When you start seeing the results," he says. "It just inspires you to rock on!" // He stands in the middle of the mirrored walls. He admits the motivation was originally pure aesthetics, keeping up

with the Joneses in hip hop, which now requires an inflated physique to match the bling and the whip. But since, he's discovered other benefits like clearer thinking and healthier living, to name a few

"It was one thing to already be a high-energy nigga, but now, not only can I exert the energy, but I can also control how I exert the shit," he grows. "From the stage to sex, you busting a nut, and you still standing up like a muthafuckin' iron horse, knee deep in the ass again like you didn't even bust off!"

The room laughs at his iron horse comparison, and he cackles right along.

Meet the "new" Busta Rhymes. The one he wants you to see: The guy with the chiseled body and harder attitude, the flossed-out MC who casually wears a half-million dollars worth of jewelry at any given time, the radical rapper who shaved the hair he's been growing since 1989 and repackaged himself anew. "In enceded to shed the weight of the negative dumb shit," he says. "That's really what the shedding [cutting the hair] process was. It was the symbolism of me being reborn."

Nowadays, his toothy, expressive smile is often framed as a cynical smirk. But even without the hair and the implied negativity he left lying on the floor of the barbershop, he still finds himself in tight situations—the kinds of situations you would never have associated with a former Leader of the New School.

It starts with the shooting incident at the Brooklyn see finks "Douth IK (Remiz)" video, where his close friend and bodyguard Israel "Iz" Ramirez was shot and killed. Then the drama continues with a series of troubling headlines (a civil suit from a previous confrontation with a fan as well as another volatile fan encounter that implied gay bashing) and culminates in an alleged alteraction in a Miami nightclub with former Source owner Dave Mays, who was reportedly clocked in the head with a champagne bottle. (Though Mays later confirmed a physical dispute with Rhymes, he claims someone else hit him with an unknown object.)

A source close to Rhymes emphatically denies the incident, refusing to comment on something he deems "absurd." and "not even in Busta's character."

PROPHET OF RAGE THIS TIME, BUSTA'S

COMING WITH A BANG, BUT HE'S BEEN RELEAS-ING APOCALYPTIC SOLO ALBUMS FOR 10 YEARS. CHECK THE FLIPMODE GENERAL'S PAST WORKS.



After graduating from Leaders of the New School, his class cut-up crew, Busta enlists Flipmode Squad to back his sofo debut. Here, he enhances his animated Rah-Rah swagger with songs like "Woo Hahilf Got You All in Check" and "Everything Remains Raw." Yet he manages to add his visions of doom ("There's only five years left!") through menacing beats left!") through menacing beats



When Disaster Strikes... (1997)
In spite of a looming sense of despair, the Dungeon Dragon tames his zigzag, fiery flow, adding finesse to smashes like "Dangerous" and "Put Your Hands Where My Eyes Could See." >>

From here, it would be pretty easy to tell a story of the pumped-up MC suddenly transformed by a new musical outlook and juiced up on beats from Dr. Dre, the Victor Conte of hip hop.

If you hang around a little longer, however, you'll notice that there's more going on in Busta's life. To hear it from the man himself, you'll have to wait until he's finally alone in the corner of a recording studio, no publicist and no entourage—just his thoughts, a bottle of Hennessy, a fresh pack of cigarettes, and a reason to reminisce.

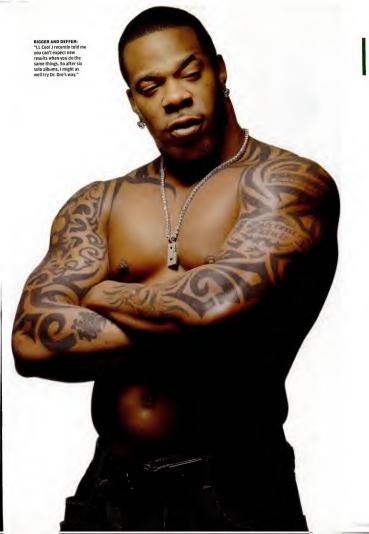
One thing you'll find, beyond the big addy of five (one of which passed away in utero) flexing his chest for all to see, is the little boy inside who still seeks direction from his own father. That's when he'll tell you how his father's heart attack changed his outlook on life. "He lost a lot of hair, and he lost a lot of weight." Rhymes remembers. "And for the first time in my life, I saw him in a vulnerable state, and it fucked me up. I wouldn't cry in his face because I understood the concept of strength he showed me as my dad. But when I left, I would cry all the way to my crib."

Rhymes is so somber, you almost expect the story to have a sad ending. But with a sharp turn, his voice strengthens. "My father, right now, is so ill with his swage-from his gym game to his discipline game to quitting cigarettes and liquor—that he looks better than he did before the heart attack, which is my better inspiration to get in shape."

He smiles, a weight off his chest. "I was dealing with this for all these years when I had to run around and make my happy records for niggas," he says. "I hid behind my happy records. What my father gave me was an example to live by. The way he didn't show vulnerability in life, I did through the music, keeping my records high energy and happy so you wouldn't see the vulnerable state."

BUSTA RHYMES WAS born Trevor Smith on May 20, 1972, in Brooklyn, exactly one day before his high school friend and fellow rap superstar Christopher "The Notorious BLG." Wallace. Like Wallace. Like was the progeny of two Jamaicans who migrated to New York for a better way of life. Rup fans are well aware of his later move to Uniondale, Long Island, in sixth grade, where he and his cousin Cut Monitor Milo befriended the





future Leaders of the New School-Charlie Brown and Dinco D.

But when he moved back to Broodlyn by inith grade, he was like everybody else who wanted to be fly by any means. At Westinghouse high school, he met a few other people who had the same attitude. There was Shawn "Jay-Z" Carter, who was the "young, fly nigga." He had a thick gold Big Daddy Kane-style rope that Butsa wanted back then but was shocked when he saw the \$5,000 sticker price. And there was Biggie, who, Rhymes says, "wasn't even rapping then, but he'd move a little bit of weed in the bath-mom."

Not that Busta was seeing very much of either of them since he was making his own moves out of town-taking the reverse city-to-country route of the crack cocaine rush. School was two days a week, "he says, leaning back in a leather couch in the main lounge at Sherman Oaks' Record One Studios, putting the finishing touches on The Big Bang in Dr. Dre's preferred launching pad. "Wednesday, you'd skip town. Thursday, Friday, Saturday were the get-money days. You'd come home on Sunday. Then you'd go back to school on Monday to show off the shit you bought.

His parents learned of his dealings after his first arrest at 14 ("For being in the wrong place at the wrong time," he says). But that didn't stop him. It was a sour experience in West Baltimore that made him want out of the drug game for good. Rhymes and a partner were using a crack head's crib as a home base and letting him serve the customers hand-to-hand-a rookie mistake that almost got them killed. ("On the way to the customers, the crack head would tap the bag," Rhymes says.) After they screamed on their host, things got really ugly, "He got some local niggas to stick up the spot," Rhymes says. "Niggas caught us off guard and locked us in the basement for two and half days." They eventually kicked down the door to escape.

Meanwhile, Rhymes's supplier didn't care about his predicament. "They sent us back there with a heavy package and some new ratchets," Busta says. "We bounced with all of that shit. I was a rap nigga with a deal after that. They never saw me again."

TODAY A FRAMED Jean-Michel Basquiat print of "Charles The First" hangs on the wall behind the couch where Rhymes sits. On the lower corner of the painting is a scrawled admonition to a future hip hop generation: "Most Young Kings Get Their Heads Cut Off."

Wearing the crown is something that Rhymes aspires to—but he knows that heavy is the head that wears it. He's been near the top of the radio and video charts for months with his echizophrenic party thumper "Touch It," but his comeback stride has been marred by the murder of Issael "Iz" Ramirez, who was shot on the video set of the remix for that very song.

The video, filmed on a Brooklyn soundstage the day of the Super Bowl XL, had a main event feel to it. Mary J. Blige, DMX, Papoose, Lloyd Banks, Rah Digga, and Missy Elliott were on hand to do their parts. Boxer Ronald "Winky "Wright was also there readying his close-up. It was supposed to be a celebration of the resurgence of the East Coast in hip hop, not unlike the "Flava In Ya Ear (Remix)" Busta was featured on with Craig Mack, LL Cool J, Rampage, and Biggie years ago. At least that's what Rlympes thought.

"Everything about that day was a beautiful, safe, comfortable zone," Rhymes says. "We got beautiful children in the video. We ain't gonna bring no kids in the environment unless it's a safe one."

Ramirez, a 20-year-old former bouncer tumed security guard, referred to by the New York Pott as a "bling handler," was present more to keep track of Rhymes' s jewels during the numerous costrume changes than to guard them. The atmosphere was light enough that Ramirez and Rhymes fooled around between takes, with Ramirez showing the rapper various martial arts moves he'd learned as a third-degree black belt.

Some reports, including one concerning an audio recording of the ensuing fracas, even paint Rhymea sa peacemaker. Newspapers, however, pointed to an on-set beef between Swizz Beatz and members of Tony Yayo's crew. Before long, shots rang out, people zoomed off in SUVs, and Ramirez, a father of three, was left holding the bullet.

Rhymes was left behind to deal with the devastating feelings of losing a friend and the messy fallout that came after-he's since been attacked and vilified for not cooperating with the police's investigation.



Extinction Level Event—The Final World Front (1998) Steamy Janet Jackson duet aside ("What's It Gonna Be?!"), Busta stays on his soapbox, From the dramatic "There's Only One Year Left!!!" intro to the surrea! "Gimme Some More," Busta acrites like It's 1999.



Anarchy (2000)
Here in his prophetic moment
of truth—millennium arrives,
yet all is safe—Busta relegates
most of his terror to annihilating MCs. And the critics slam
his rebellion in spite of
radio jams like "Get Out!!"
and "Fire."

"It's your responsibility to speak before you're the next victim," says Geoffrey Davis, founder of the James E. Davis Stop The Violence Foundation, whose own brother—a former New York City councilman—was murdered by a political rival in 2003. As a result, Davis has taken a hard-line stance—calling for an all-out boycott of Rhyme's imusic until he talks to the police. "He didn't ask for this, and I sympathize. I'm trying to save Busta Rhymes's life. But if you don't talk, the bad guys are still there."

Rhymes, who has been bombarded with negative headlines, is weary of those who allow recent events to erase 15 years of good will and fun times.

Over the course of two days he interrupts conversations with VIBE to take direct phone calls from Ramirez's relatives, some about the dedication he makes to Ramirez at the beginning of the remix video and others were just to check in It's in sharp contrast to the blaing New York tabloid accusations that he doesn't care about the family or the activists' proclamations that his lack of cooperation points to a carelessness for life.

"I sleep comfortably at night because I know what I stand for," Busta says. "And in terms of how it's going to be handled and dealt with? Time is going to be the best teller of that. But right now, all I give a fuck about is the Ramirez family and my own family support system. I don't give a fuck about nobody else and what they have to say."

But even his family support system has failed him in the past. While he was tearing through his high-energy tours, he was locked in an unhappy relationship with Joanne Wood, the mother of all four of his sons. (He shares a daughter with another woman.)

"She was my shorty before I got my deal." But when he came back from the road, things

"She was my shorty before I got my deal." But when he came back from the road, things weren't all good. "Another nigga's truck was in her driveway," he begins. "Her little brother was playing outside, telling me she got company, and that I can't go upstairs."

Their first son, Tahiem, died before birth. The pain of that, coupled with the former infidelity, proved to be too much. Rather than confront her about it, he internalized his pain and sexed everything that moved. "Seeing it one time justified the many times that I did it," he says.

But Busta, with his old-school West Indian values, stuck it out. "I always compromised my own happiness because family was first," he says. "That was the concept that was instilled in me from young."

Staying with Wood came with a price. He tells stories of her trying to throw herself out of a moving car when he didn't take her shopping for clothes at the shops of her choosing or moments when he says she took his son to a homeless shelter when he was on the road and didn't adhere to her demands. Of course, she has her side as well. Back in 2004, Wood was on Wendy Williams's radio show making extensive allegations about long-term abuse, which Rhymes vehemently denies.

"She got on Wendy Williams talking about how I broke her jaw, threw her down the stairs—all types of crazy shir," he says. "There's been times she might have slapped me in the face for something. There's been times I might have had to snatch her up and prevent her from slapping me in my face. That's why I never wanted to confront my babb's mother. I think it's bitch for a man to have any confrontation with a woman. Your woman start talking shir, leave. That's it. You fight, you look like a bitch, homic."

He's still upset their drama went public, down to a nasty scene in family court. "It's ill when you have to go on TV and smile, but earlier you were in the court getting shitted on by your baby's mother and a lesbian man-looking bitch holding your child in her arms, talking about she gonna replace you as the father-looking like

a dude in a three-piece suit. They in the courthouse talking shit to you, and you can't do anything."

In the end Busta faced down Wood and her lover. Busta won. "If I was this crazy nigga that did all the crazy shit that she alleged, how the fuck did I win custody of all three of our kids, man," he says. "My kids live with me."

In spite of all their ugly battles, he makes a point to note that the kids still come first. "I never tell my children to be mad at their moms," he says. "You only get one and no one is replacing her."

WITH ALL THE INNER TURMOIL, it's no wonder that the titles of past Busta Rhymes albums like Extinction Level Event—The Final World Front have symbolized the end of life as we know it. But The Big Bang represents a fresh start, a clearing out of the old to make way for the new method.

"LL Cool J recently told me that you can't expect new results doing the same shit," Rhymes says. "I had six solo albums to do it my way. I figured I might as well try doing it Dre's way."

Rhymes says this as he stands in a studio, deep inside Record One. Here, almost around the clock, the Doctor himself—or one of his many interns—stands behind the board working on the next platinum smash. "Don't write about anything you see in here," Busta says, with a serious look on his face. Like what? Maybe the stacks of Ampex reels laying around, which are filled with unreleased songs from the Dogersuhe era?



Genesis (2001)
With top knob-twisters like Or.
Dre ("Break Ya Neck") and the
Neptunes ("What It Is," "Pass
the Courvoisier Part II"), Busta
retools his focus from predicting the ending to envisioning a
new beginning.



"Terrorism, motherfuckers bombing New York...ti ain't safe no more," Bus growls on the album's title track. Aside from "Make It Clap," his lively duet with Spillf Star, Busta's sixth album doesn't receive a standing ovation for his postgregory Johnson Gregory Johnson

"I'm serious," Busta says. "Dre gets real paranoid about that kind of shit."

For someone so press averse, Dr. Dre's formula is really simple: Just make the best record possible—always. Having records go platinum (seemingly at will) has freed Dre from the constraints that other artists call release dates.

For the last three years Busta's been working primarily with Dr. Dre, but also getting notable help from Swizz Beatz, Timbaland, the late J Dilla, and others. There's even a song with Stevie Wonder that's surprisingly effective. He's stull just as agile as he was in his "Rowl-Rowl" days, but he fluctuates his rhyme flow: sometimes taking the time to paint a picture, other times descending into the groove so deeply that his vocal rhythms become more important than the actual content of his word.

"There's a clarity that I have in who I am as a man and a clarity that I have as far as the space that I'm in," Busta says in the studio's main lounge. A flat-screen television over the fireplace is tuned to TNT, where the San Antonio Spurs have just finished silencing the Dallas Mayericks.

Almost on cue, Dr. Dre walks in and exchanges a few pleasantries before heading back to the A studio where he's mixing the record. He doesn't say anything, except to ask if VIBE has heard the album.

"I'm in love," he says about Big Bang. And with that, he's gone.

Ask Busta his thoughts and he gets excitde." If eel new. I look new. I am new. I sound new," Busta says. "It wasn't spoon-fed to me. I had to go all through these years to fignee it out. Just take the time to learn and to accept that and play your position, and you get the greatest reward that you can't fathom in your wildest dreams."

For Busta, that means a reinvigorated career, the love of his kids, the health of his family. It's bigger than muscles, and he's ready to show the world the growth deep within.

"Sometimes to achieve greatness, sacifices have to be made in the process," Rhymes says. "Some of the sacrifices are the ones that supercede the meaning of the word painful. The shit husts beyond description. But once you survive that, what you're prepared for is some shit that makes you damn near unconquerable." Almost like an iron horse.











row from Amerie, Rihanna watches the Miami Heat spank the New York Knicks. She sits proper like her mama

taught her—shoulders back, hands in her lap, knees and the heels of her boots together. This is her very first live NBA game, and she's brimming with excitement, but she has a lot to learn.

Like when you're a fledgling celebrity in the front row, don't bang a popcom box with a cotton candy stick too hard when a guard hist a three. The yellow puffs will cascade on to the court and pose danger—and embarrassment. But Rihanna uses every instant as a learning opportunity—this outing included. So here she is, moments after the popcom incident, taking a tip from the meticulous America as photographers pose them together at half time.

"Face that way," the more seasoned starlet instructs the newbie, gesturing off to the left and into the stands. "The light is better over there."

Rihanna turns and smiles almost like a natural.

Adjusting to the spotlight has been a process peppered with growing pains for 18year-old Robyn Rihanna Fenty, who, in just over a year, has gone from a Barbados schoolgirl to an international pop act. "I knew nothing about the industry," Rihanna says, her perfectly painted eyes widening, "Iknew nothing about what it's like to be on the road, even something as small as how to the road, even something as small as how to sing into a microphone," she pauses and takes it all in. "I have matured so much."

AS A KID, RIHANNA WAS A TOMBOY, climbing trees, digging dirt, chasing birds, and

wimming with neighborhood boys. She only wore skirts when forced to for church. Later, as a member of the local cadet corps, she pitched tents, fired air rifles and handguns, and played drum in the marching band. She often stayed up until the wee hours to shine her boots (if was considered a disgrace if the toes didn't show a reflection). Her transformation into a girlygid came quick, and her singing career followed soon after.

Just last summer, Rihanna's single "Poo De Replay" intoxicated the nation with its dancehall charm. It landed the No. 2 spot on Billboard's Hot too in under two months, faster than any Canibbean club bange precedingit. Herplayful follow-up, "If1's Lovin" That You Want," broke the Top 20. But despite Rihanna's success as a hot digital download, her album, Musicofibe Sum, only banked modest sales of 69,000 ifs first week out.

Jay-Z, who signed her to Def Jam hous after her audition, insists the girl has star quality. With heavy rotation hits tucked under her belt, the trick now is to make her audience know her and not just her music. "Rihanna had really big songs," Jigga says. "People don't tend to latch on to a person when songs are that big. They just latch on to the songs. She is a beautiful and humble person. The idea now is to connect her to people, to have them get to know her."

A multimedia onslaught may do just that. In April, just eight months after her 2005 debut, Rihanna dropped her second album, A Girl Like Me. In February, she became the face of the sporty Miss Bisou clothing line found in ICPenney stores, Laving the groundwork for a potential film career, the former head cheerleader has a cameo in the upcoming Bring It On 3. Her lead single, "S.O.S.," which samples Soft Cell's 1982 newwave smash "Tainted Love," was tapped for Nike's new dance clothing line, and Rihanna performs in an accompanying workout video. The original "S.O.S." video was shot on Rihanna's 18th birthday, and her accompanying party was held at Robert DeNiro's L.A. eatery, Ago, There, the underage celebrant admits she sipped pinot grigio ("Shhhh!" she says with a giggle when the subject comes up).

But with increased exposure comes increased scrutiny, and Rihanna expresses her frustration about malicious trash talkers on her new reggae lament "Den Haters." The song is Rihanna's anthens. Fibe's experienced years of backbiting and jealousy Just last September, while staying at a resort back home in Barbados, she was photographed in a bathing suit and jeans while returning from the beach. Alocal newspaper splashed the image on the front page and the outcry lasted for three weeks.

"People started calling radio programs and saying that I wasn't dressed appropriately," remembers Rihanna. "It was one of those onepiece bathing suits with the cut-away sides,













and it was a bit low down the middle. They probably thought it was a regular roop, but it was crazy because my friends had bikini tops on so they must have known we were coming from the beach. They said, 'She dressed too skimpy,' and 'her management is trying to sell sex.' It was silly, but I laughed at it.'

She may have a thick skin now, but that wasn't always the case. Before she was discovered by a vacationing producer and brought to the States, Rihanna was already apublic face in her hometown, having won a beauty pageant at age 16. The victory unleashed the catty culture of adolescence that left her short on friends. So-called pals began whispering behind her back. Unwilling to relive the most painful digs, Rihanna only says, "They said horrible stuff. I don't even want to say."

After soul searching during sunsets at the beach, she eventually learned to let it all go. "Your friends are supposed to be a positive force to help make you better and feel better," she says. "I don't need negativity in my life. After my record deal, it got even worse. I use tut them off."

This is why, in part, Rihanna has spent a lifetime surrounding herself with male friends. "I have like, 25 guy friends and like, three girliends," she says. "None of them try to hit on me, I just have that brotherly relationship. Girls always have their guard up against one

another. I just get along with guys better."

Despite her male relationships, Rihanna says she's stayed romance free, since her career began, though some men—and she won't say who—have tried in vain to kick it to her. Not that she's avere to coupling up—she admits she finds Damian 'J'r. Cong' Marley's dreds and 'f'all attitude' quite attractive (she's only met him once). "It would be a cool bonus to have a boyfriend now, "she says, citing her buys schedule as her primary obstacle. "But you shouldn't depend on a way to make you fife better or good at all."

There's only been one long relationship in her short life, starting at age 14 and lasting just over a year. When she felt she outgrew him, she killed it by seeing another guy behind his back. "I wanted a person who I can have a conversation with and grow with versus just flaunting someone on my arm," she says. Taking a page from Usher's book, Rihanna sings about theating ways on her Vinfatishfia!" which was written be y Ne-Yo.

That transgression aside, Rihanna is generally well-behaved. Unlike entertainers who build careers by being gossip and tabloid fodder, she won't go to clubs because she's underage. Not prone to excesses, she avoids bling and says she has yet to make "any big purchases."

"I don't see her adopting a lifestyle she is not accustomed to or one that is not a part of her," says her mother Monica Fenty, a Guyanese accountant who raised Rihanna and her two younger bothens. (Rihanna's dad, a white Bajan man, separated from the family when Rihanna was little girl,) "She was raised with moral values: respect people, respect yourself. You see right and wrong, and you make your own choices."

FROM THE BACKSEAT OF A TOWN CAR.

a pink Motorola Razr pressed to her ear, Rihanna chooses to pass on what wisdom she has leamed. Herunziped Marc/Jacobs boots reveal bare feet, a habit leftower from her childhood by the shore. It seems a friend, calling from Barbados, has got great news to share. "That is so good, just pray about it and keep your mouth shut!" Rihanna yells into her phone.

The car cawls through Seventh Avenue traffic and creeps past her own image splashed across the JCPenney billboard in Times Square. "Sometimes you can play ourself," Rhanna intones into the phone. An edge creeps into the warm voice. "It's happened to me so many times. Remember: Nothing is promised until it comes to pass."

And for a girl who's seen so much transpire in such a short time, she should know. "I am a child, but I have to think and act like a woman," she'll later say. "This business forces you to."



OH. SNAP!

While DEM FRANCHIZE BOYZ and D4L fight about who started it, fans are snapping, leaning, and rocking to the sounds. In the first of a three-part series that explores emerging music scenes, RONDELL CONWAY goes to the heart of Bankhead to see what's poppin'. Photographs by Erin Pattice O'Brien









no one has clued them in on their relative obscurity.

"Really, our buzz is the same throughout the country,"

says Pimpin', amid the flashing cameras there to greet

him at the group's party. "Turn on your TV right now,

and you're going to see our faces. We're the face of snap

music." // As the gentler kin to crunk, snap is ATL's

most recent cultural innovation. Known for its simple





FRANCHIZE

BOYZ



content, its steady finger-pops, and multitoned 808s, it's yet another development in the region's ongoing quest to dominate the hip hop charts. That's why you can't totally blame Franchize members for being a bit self-indulgent. Their lively single, "I Think They Like Me," made a major impact with 148,866 spins on radio in 2005, spilling over into 'o'6. And a week after their sophomore release, On Top O'Our Game, hit is theyes, SoundScan

counted 106,000 units scanned. As a result, they've become snap music ambassadors.

ACCORDING TO THOSE INVOLVED, WHAT'S BEING CALLED

snap music was born sometime around zoot in Bankhead, on the Westside of Atlanta. Not to be mistaken with the city's affluent Buckhead neighborhood, Bankhead's crime-infested blocks are testimony to America's growing separation between the haves and have-nost. In the midst of all the aggression, 'bow-throwing, and mean-mugging, a lighter sound emerged. Now, thanks to the combined efforts of Franchize, Dat, and others, Bankhead has become ground zero of a real, live movement.

"Snap is the heart and soul of the Westside of Atlanta," says D4L's Lefabian "Fabo" Williams, 22, who's easily recognizable for his colorful 'fits and shoe-brushing dance moves.

"It's really starting up a whole new sound that everyone is catching on to," says Pimpin', Franchize's most ardent promoter. "But to understand, you gotta come check it out for yourself."

And experiencing it for yourself ain't hard to do. Turn on your radio, and you'll hear the bubbly jams. Enter any club from New York

CONNECT 4: (From Jeft) Fabo, Stuntman, Shawty Lo, and Mook B









to L.A., and you're certain to catch throngs of people doing a rhythmic one-two bounce from left to right with cadenced finger-snaps. And in the South, where crunk's wheezy synths and hyperchants are known to send club-goers into a manic frenzy, snap-happy fans are, um, popping up. "We ain't saving that we replaced crunk music just vet," says Buddie. "But in the near future, that's what we trying to do. Eventually, crunk will fade away."

That's a tall order by all accounts. But they've proven to be a resilient bunch. After tearing up the local clubs with a string of hits like "Money" and "White Tee," Franchize signed on with Universal Records in 2003. Weak promotions and bad timing-the label released Nelly's Sweat and Suit on the same day-led to an anemic-selling selftitled debut, and their deal went as quickly as it came. Luckily for them, they made a fan out of hometown legend Jermaine Dupri, who remixed their single, "I Think They Like Me," before signing them to his So So Deflabel in 2005. "Like Lil Jon did with crunk, this sound is transcending," says Dupri. "And with Franchize, I think we're yet to see the possibilities."

BACK AT COMPOUND, THE PARTY IS ABOUT TO GET... crunk? ('cause parties don't get snap-at least not yet). The VIP is just about filled to capacity with celebrities-Da Brat, Bow Wow, Trey Songz, Iim Iones-and their entourages. Even the two girls from the red carpet have made their way into the restricted area. perhaps, to get more familiar with Franchize members. Youngsters and Bankhead gangsters turn on the energy when Franchize runs through album favorites while busting out new dance moves like the motorcycle (see "Move Something," pg. 137). And when the irresistible bass drop from "I Think They Like Me" hits, the club gets, er, snap.

While DFB-mania is going on down here, across town, D4L couldn't care less. Snap music's other fantastic four is performing at Atlanta's Vision Nightclub & Lounge alongside Slim Thug, Keyshia Cole, and 8Ball and MJG. Party promoters who booked a D4L show

"FRANCHIZE IS TRYING TO TAKE CREDIT. BUT NOBODY **WAS DOING** D4L."

SNAP BEFORE -SHAWTY LO. D4L

on the same night as the Franchize party are seemingly playing up the rivalry between the two. And on this night, thanks in part to the other artists on the bill, DaL's party had an energy that exceeded their snap rivals.

But don't read too much into that, in the bigger picture, D4L is just as unrecognizable as their counterparts. (Quick, name the four members of D₄L!) Aside from Fabo, who rocks whiterimmed shades in the club, the

other three members of the Bankhead-bred group-Dennis "Mook B" Butler, 25; Carlos "Shawty Lo" Walker, 25; and Adrian "Stuntman" Parks, 23-are virtually indistinguishable. And for the moment, this ragtag bunch isn't concerned with fame-they want respect. "Everybody who hated on us can at least take their hats off and give us our props," says Shawty Lo, the feisty lil' man of D4L. "They gotta recognize what we've done."

And what they've done is take their playful, pulsating single, "Laffy Taffy," from the clubs of Atlanta to the top of the Billboard charts. In the process, their debut, Down For Life, was RIAA certified gold. "This ain't no gimmick," says Fabo. "We're proving that we ain't no local jokers.'

And just because their quest for respect stretches across the nation, DaL demands their props locally as well. Their beef with Franchize over who started snap, for example, is 100 percent grade A. "Dem Franchize Girls!" says a fired up Fabo. "They are another example of somebody who don't appreciate where they came from. They came up under us. How could they have started snap? I look at Franchize as label prostitutes."

"Franchize is trying to take credit for anything anybody do in

BIG BANG THEORY.
"I brought forth a new movement," says K-Rab (below), despite
laims made by Dem Franchize Boyz (right, with Jermaine Duori)





 $At lanta, "Shawty Lo cosigns. "No body was doing snap before D_4L."$

But the story of who started snap is a complicated one. According to DJ T-Roc, the well-respected DJ of the Bankhead hot spot the Poole Palace, there is someone clse responsible for engineening the sound. "I would say K-Rab was the first to do snap," says T-Roc. "He produced a lot of the tracks I was playing in the club."

Talk to the man himself, and he'll tell you the same. "I'm that niggag," says K-Rab, who just inked a deal with Lil Jon's BME Records.
"I've brought forth a whole "nother movement, and right now the
public is getting everybody else's interpretation of it. But when my
album comes out, they're going to know that I'm the man that did
all this."

Aside from having DJ T-Roe's support, there are a few things that add creditability to K-Rab's claims. He's the producer of D4ts "Laffy Taffy" and the voice behind other early snap favorites like "Do the Poole Palace" and "Bubble Gum." Also, Franchize's in-house producer, Jimpin', will be the first to tell you that K-Rab was the person who mentored him early in his career.

Throughout all the bickering, Franchize catches the most flack for their claims as creators. Even though there's a difference in opinion between K-Rab and D4L on the topic, there seems to be a mutual respect between them. "K-Rab is like my brother," says Fabo. "We really put a lot of this stuff foogether."

None of that love gets sent Franchize's way. But ask them what's fueling the haters and critics, and they'll chalk it up to jealousy, a by-product of their prominent placement in hit maker Jermaine Dupn's camp. They came along with Jermaine and put a machine [Virgin Records] behind the snap movement, which it needed," says KD, who manages K-Rab. "But they are taking a little too much credit."

who manages K-Kab. "But they are taking a little too much credit."

"We on a whole other level now," the usually laid-back Buddie
shoots back. "We're not feeding into that stuff."

THOUGH IT'S TRICKY TO GET EVERYBODY TO AGREE ON just who started the sound, where and how it blossomed is less trou-

"HIP HOP
IS ABOUT
NEWNESS. IT
KILLS ME WHEN
PEOPLE WON'T
LET GO OF THE
SAME OLD."
--JERMAINE
DUPRI

blesome. While snap was sprouting in Bankhead, the Poole Palace became its hub. Inconspicuous-ly located off the Bankhead Highway, the Poole Palace's modest exterioris quite the contrast toils name—there's nothing lavish about the place. It resembles a small home with its homely awning and tiny red staircase. But inside, where all the snap-tastic lore takes place, everything changes. It's usually filled to canacity with local Advoments trye

ing to escape the blandness of their town's mainstream, midtown scene. And you can credit those loyal outcasts for being the people who helped birth he snap movement. "Most Atlanta IDs won't play a lot of underground music," says DJ T-Roc. "They play what's on the radio. So everybody would come to the Poole Palace wanting to break their music."

Hence, this is the place where Franchize, D4L, and K-Rab all got their break. There was even a period of unity among these now rival acts. And while the rappers were perfecting their underground sounds, many of the clubs' patrons created dances to go with the simple rhymes. The familiar one-two bounce and finger-snapping dance became known as the snap. And when the spot was rocking, almost everyone in the club would follow the lead of the club's two resident dance crews-the Flow Masters and Snap Boys. With every new record came a new dance. Clearly, the people on this side of town are no strangers to creating catchy dance moves—remember the Bankhead bounce?

With all this hype and hysteria, a nonbeliever or two may stop to ask: Is all the attention worth it? Are we being premature in labeling snap its own sound? Is it just another example of the dumbed-



FOOTWORK.

"Snap is the heart and soul of the West side of Atlanta," says D4L's Fabo, seen here demonstrating his signature move. "But to understand, you gotta check it out yourself,"

down public eating up whatever comes its way? Other rappers, not surprisingly, count themselves among the critics. Let Wu-Tang's Ghostface Killah see you enjoying these tunes, and he may snap in a different way. During a Valentine's Day concert in New York, the blunt rapper reprimanded fans for liking the music he considers wack.

Jermaine Dupri, however, gets pissed when he hears the sound being dismissed. "It kills me when people don't wanna let go of the same old hip hop," says Dupri. "Hip hop is about newness. Somewhere along the line, we got frozen in a fuckin' capsule where we don't wanna accept new shit. Just like crunk took people in a different direction, here comes this new era."

And every time you hear crunk mentioned in the same breath as snap, you've gotta wonder what role Lil Jon will play in all this. Aside from signing K-Rab and putting out the single "Snap Your Fingers," the King of Crunk has been low-key on the southern music scene. In spite of the big talk by the current snap rappers, it would take a megastar like Jon to get fully entrenched in the movement for it to overtake its crunk predecessor.

Until that happens, the score card reads like this: Dem Franchize Boyz are the ambassadors of snap, a movement they claim to have created. D4L doesn't care who gets the fame; they just want their respect for creating the sound. K-Rab also wants the world to recognize him as the originator of snap. Jermaine Dupri stands as one of the first major stars to embrace the movement, while Lil Ion sits on the outskirts toving with the prospect of becoming a major figure in it all. And oh veah, Ghostface Killah hates it.

All this attention and competitiveness will surely maintain some of the hoopla surrounding the snap movement. But no matter who lays claim to its invention or who steps forward as its face, we know that Bankhead natives will keep doing what they do. And judging by the reaction thus far, hip hop is destined to get more off the wall and extreme. "There could be something new out tomorrow," says Pimpin', "There's no telling in Bankhead, anything can happen. You iust gotta stay tuned."

MOVE SOMETHING

Whether bankhead bouncing or A-town stomping. Hotlanta dance floors are known for being heated. Here's how to step in the A.

THE DANCE: Jeanin' and rockin THEME MUSIC: Dem

Franchize Boyz" "Lean Wit It Dock Wit It-" D4L's "Betcha Can't Do It Like Me." As demonstrated in the videos arcompanying these songs, this little two-step and fingersnap step is trickler than it looks. The extra chouldor chimmy senarates the real rnckers from the

novices DIFFICULTY LEVEL (Out of five): 2.5

THE DANCE, the motorcycle THEME MUSIC: Yung

Joc's "Goin' Down." Ali ai ah at eyed tiny stretch your arms in front of you and motion as if you are revving up a Harley white dipping your shoulders to the beat. DIFFICULTY LEVEL:

THE DANCE: the poole palace, aka westside walking

THEME MUSIC: BHI'S "Do It." More challenging to master than leanin', this move requires that you hend your knees and rock your hips while moving side to

side or in a circle DIFFICULTY LEVEL: 3



Maurice G. Garland







FREEDOM'S BATTLEGROUND

A newly unearthed archive of extraordinary photojournalism from *The Birmingham News* puts us right back on the front lines of the struggle for civil rights in the segregated South of the 1950s and '60s. By Jamie Katz



IN THIS HYPERSATURATED

digital world, it's so easy to forget, to lose track of the details etched in black-and-white film. But these are the images that tell the story of the Civil Rights Movement colliding head-on with the white segregationist order in Birmingham, Ala., during the late 1950s and through the mid-'60s. They graphically recall the hopes and horrors of the era: the use of police dogs and fire hoses to disperse peaceful demonstrators; the bombing of the Sixteenth Street Baptist Church, in which four black girls died; the vicious mob attacks unleashed against the Freedom Riders, an interracial group of activists who traveled by bus across the former Confederate States of America; and the mass protests →

CIVIL WAR REDUX: (Above) 100 years after the Southern rebellion was defeated. Mississippi state troopers showed their colors as they watched 25,000 civil rights marchers approach the Alabama state capitol in Montgomery after their 54-mile march from Selma on March 25, 1965.

TRUTH IS: (Opposite) "Throughout Alabama, all sorts of devious methods are used to prevent Regroes from becoming registered volvers," Or. Matrait Luther King Jr, word in his Tamed" tetter from Birmingham Jail" in 1963. Two years later, he led tens of thousands of protesters on the Selma to Montgomery marches that were violently attacked by state troopers and others. President Lyndon B. Johnson signed the histor's doting Rights Act later that year.



ISBUS WALKS: (Opposite) Baptist ministers like Dr. King and Rev. Fred L. Shuttlesworth, a leading Birmingham clergyman, were in the vanguard of the Civil Rights Movement. On June 5, 1956, four days after Alabama banned the NAACP, Rev. Shuttlesworth preached to a packed church. 'I was saying what I wanted to say, and I was screaming against segregation,' he later recalled. 'I was getting the crowd whipped up.' He also organized the Alabama Christian Movement for Human Rights, Bed protests, and Invited Dr. King to Join him in Birmingham. In retaliation, Rev. Shuttlesworth's home was bombed repeatedly.

BOYS IN THE HOOD: (Below) The Ku Klux Klan, which also pledged allegiance to Protestant Christianity, was central to white resistance. Klan members staged murderous attacks in Birmingham, where this rally was photographed in 1957, and elsewhere throughout the Deep South. → led by Dr. King, which finally helped move the nation to change its laws, and in many cases, its heart. All the while, a group of unknown. unsung local newspaper photographers did their job, and did it superbly. Working for The Birmingham News, they snapped roll after roll of pictures, often in dangerous situations, bearing witness to the momentous events in their community and across the state. Yet only a small percentage of those images ended up in the paper, which, as current News editor Tom Scarritt, 53, dryly acknowledges, "could have been more aggressive" in covering the →



→ civil rights struggle. And for decades, most of the photos gathered dust in a cardboard box. The paper's buried treasure finally came to light in November 2004, when a former photo intern named Alexander Cohn, rooting around in an equipment closet for a camera lens, stumbled on that box of negatives. marked "Keep. Do Not Sell." It was like finding a steamer trunk of amazing old family photos in the attic. "I didn't know what I had at first," says Cohn, 30, "but when I opened up one of the envelopes of negatives and put it on the light table, I realized they were events I knew about just growing up in Birmingham and studying the period in high school," With the editors' permission, he began the painstaking task of researching and cataloguing the collection, which numbers some 5,000 pictures. A portfolio of them was published →

TOO MUCH TO BEAB: (Opposite) An unidentified woman faints during charged proceedings in a federal court in Birmingham on March 1, 1956, at which MAACP lawyers were contesting the expulsion of the University of Alabama's first bhack student. Less than a month earlier, Authenie Lucy Foster, then 26 years old, had arrived on campus following a court order compelling the school to admit her to its graduate program. She was almost immediately besieged by hostile crowsk chanting death threats and blocking her path to class. After three days, she was suspended from the student body—for her own safety, the university said, Foster finally returned to campus in 1988, earning a master's four years later in the same graduation ceremony as her daughter, Grazia, who received her undergraduate degree. By the fall of 2005, there were 2,465 black students enrolled at the University of Alabama.

STRAGBYEN UP AND FLY RIGHTY (Below) Four men—lesse Mabry, E.L. Vinson, Mike Fox, and Orliss Clevenger—scent heir faces in a Birmingham courtroom as they are sentenced to 180 days In jail and fined for an onstage assault on Nat "King" Cole in Birmingham's Municipal Auditorium in 1966. Bern in Mongomery, Ala., and risade in Chicago, Ole was a trailblasting modern jaze planist before he became one of the leading pop vocalists of all time. After the Birmingham incident, he vowed never to be dropm in Alabama agasin.







WANNA BE STARTIN' SOMETHING: (Above) In April and May 1963. Dr. King led an unprecedented wave of child isobare misering about a filling for the immediate integration of businesses and public facilities and an expansion of employment opportunities. Hundreds of peaceful demonstrators were arrested, including many high stroots students, who were set upon by dogs and hosed by fireflighters in a blunt-force display of police power that was broadcast around the world. By mid-liven, the protests had expansing active site of the protest shad expansing cities nike addaction, and cities nike addaction, colonies norther of Birmingham, where street demonstrators (kneeling, above) were taunted and threatened beyond the gaze of most of the media.

IS IT A CRIME? (Opposite) on March 6, 1957, Rev. Shuttlesworth tested an Alabama ruling made the previous day upholding racial segregation in interstate ravel waiting rooms surf as the one at Birmingham's train depot, Terminal Station, where Lamar Weaver (left), a local white minister and early civil rights advocate, greeted Shuttlesworth and his wife, Ruby, in a public show of support. Minutes after this photograph was taken, Weaver barely escaped a brick-throwing mob outside, which reportedly included Robert Chambliss, who was convicted years later of bombing the Stittenth Street Baptick Church, Weaver, now in his later OS, lives in Martita, Ga, and Rev. Shuttlesworth, 84, moved to Cincinnat in 1961 but returns often to Alabama, where his statue now stands in front of the Birmingham Civil Rights Institute and one of the city's street has been named in his honor.

For more photographs, information, Web links, and audio interviews, go to al.com/unseen.

→ in a special section of the News this past February 26 titled, "Unseen. Unforgotten." Barnett Wright, 45, the veteran African-American reporter who wrote the article accompanying that special section, says the staff was inspired by the project. "We had a sense of mission," he says. "This was something we had to do, and we had to do right." Though there's been some criticism of the publication's role in that era, he says, "I think the fact that we published these photographs shows how much the newspaper has changed." The goal of the exceptional Birmingham News photographers, who created that archive, however, was timeless. As one of them, Robert Adams, 84, told Wright simply, "It's an honest record." So you won't forget.



















DESIGNER HOUSE WITH A LITTLE HELP FROM CALVIN KLEIN HOME AND ARMANI CASA, YOUR CRIB CAN LOOK AS STYLISH AS YOUR OUTFITS. PHOTOGRAPHS BY ERIC MCNATT. STYLING BY MEMSOR KAMARAKÉ



Brushstroke bed collection by Calvin Klein Home.

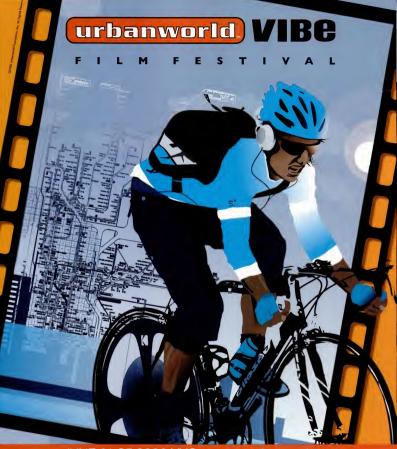
(From left) 'Inn tank, linen pants, and key rhain, all by Calvin Klein Collection. White bilb biouse and slik layered circle skirt, both by Calvin Klein Collection earnings by It also pobling wooden and cork bracelets, all by Isaac Manevitz for Ben-Amou.



(From left) Carnel moto jucket, grav knilt Faintr, and suede high-anale sneakers, all by Emporto Armané, jean by Armale Jassa. High control for the control fo







JUNE 21-25 2006 NYC











REVIEWS / COLUMNS

REVOLUTIONS



the economy improved, and Cube turned his attention to his spotty yet action-packed Hollywood career. The albums he released, War & Peace Vol. If the War Disk John Vol. 2 (The Peace Soic), were disapointing. The once prodigious mind seemed flaccid as he rapped about clubbing, groupies, and gangbanging. Sure, the Pyrics were ignorant and misogyristic, but worse, they were just tacky.

Now that the Republicans are screwing everything up again and militancy is once again in vogue, Cube has stirred from his long slumber. Laugh Now, Cry Later Is his best album in 13 years. His delivery is crisp and uncomplicated, but razor sharp, like gangster haikus.

"Growin' Up' tells the genesis story, He traces NMAs beginnings, getting out of the group before he "gor paped" (in music industry terms) and got lost artistically ("I used to be political, lyrical, now you want it suparcoated like cereal," he explains), and ultimately makes peace with the selections in kicolest: Never thought 1'd see Eazy in a casket. / Thanks for everything / That's on everything / I learned a lot of game from you / I like vour son / He on this name from you."

Sounding very mature at age 36, a time when a lot of graying rappers are nostalgic for the colden Fiz, he's awakened to a blinged-out world and doesn't like what he sees. Taking a page (fronically) from Common's book, Cube anthropomorphizes gangster rap in "Child Support," but instead of describing it as a "ound-the-way girl that sold out, rap is a bastard child with a deadbeat diddy. Cube reminds rappers born in the '80s how he

Ice Cube has stirred from his long slumber.

fathered the genre (not to espouse pointless violence, violence was In reaction to a senseless society) and calls out beef for profit: "Keep your

ass out the casket / Interscope will spend your money / They don't give a fuck / About a dead rapper nigga they'li chop it up."

While there's a certain preachy-old-man grumpiness to his parables, his vividly sketched ghetto fables do illustrate consequences. On the title track, Cube satirizes that guy in the 'hood who spends his '> month-old baby's credit on cars and shopping sprees in the mall. His greed ultimately lands him in jail, where he finds do cho cill title, to lost. "why We Thugs" finds Cube invoking the haunting image of an old lady, Bible in tow, at her grandson's trial. The Judge's gavel comes down, and the boy is carted off to a lail too far for her to visit.

Still, whereas the album makes poignant points and timply lyrical references to Dave Chappelie, California's Governator, and Jacob the Jeweler, the beat selection feels outdated and monotonous at times. The Scott Storch tracks sound like defunct Dr. Dre knockoffs, while the Lil points come off like watered-down crunk for the lob set. Throughout the joints come off like watered-down crunk for the lob set. Throughout the light set of the set of set of the set of the set of set of the set of the set of set of the set of set of the set of set o

STAMP OF APPROVAL

CLASSIC (M) (M) (M) (M)
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HEAT (M) (M)
SUSPECT (M) (M)
FRISBEE (M)

album, predictable bass lines and handclaps give it a last-administration feel. But even without

Hank Shocklee's richly textured samples or DJ Pooh's elegant G-funk interpolations, Laugh Now, Cry Later shows the reawakening of the N.W.A upstart known for raging against the machine.

RIHANNA A GIRL LIKE ME

@@@@

The Caribbean Queen's sound gets better with change.

which is the rescond album, it's year-old Barbados-born Rihanna dispels any lingering notions of her as a danchell-mere ReB ambasador. Although breezy steel drums and upbear homs drive sunny tracks like "Crazy Linle Thing Called Love" and "Selfish Girl," A Girl Like Miss jao pollbum, one informed but not bounded by Rihann's Carlibban nots.

The lead single, "S.O.S.," epitomizes the album's upbeat, coquettish vibe with its sped-up sample of Soft Cell's '80s hit "Tainted Love." But it's the ballads that showcase Rihanna's newfound chanisma, solid vocal range, and her ability to channel deeprototed emotions with ease. Penned



by Ne-Yo, "Unfaithful" finds Rihanna embodying a woman tortured by her infidelity and its effects on her mate: "I don't wanna hurt him anymore / I don't wanna take away his life / I don't wanna by a murder."

Despite the occasional stum-

ble—"P.S.," an interpolation of Aaliyah's "Four Page Letter," falls short and "A Girl Like Me" is a yawn-inducing slow jam—Rihanna flips the sophomore slump paradigm, proving some things are better the second time around.

EXTRA! EXTRA! Born on February 20, RIHANNA shares a birth date with Kurt Cobain.

BLOCK BUSTERS Zooming in on the latest music DVDs



THE ART OF 16 BARS (QO3 Entertainment)

«REW- MCs as diverse as Nas., Common, Guru,
and Kanye West breaking down their writing (or
nonwriting) process, from bars and hooks to
freestyles and song concepts.

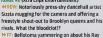
»FF. Rappers critiquing footage of other
rappers, one offering a critical viewpoint.



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Benzino association. Jayson Rodriguez

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ST. ELSEWHERE DOMNTOWN (ATLANTIC



Cee-Lo and Danger Mouse forge a formidable alliance.

n hip hop, collaboration has become a euphemism for, "Hit me with 10Gs. IM me the Pro Tools files. I'll drop a hot 16, shoot it back, nice doing business." Thankfully, over-ground but under the radar people like Cee-Lo. of Goodie Mob fame, and Danger Mouse. The Grey Album's architect, still believe that chemistry can produce something more valuable than the sum of its parts. St. Elsewhere, the duo's debut under the Gnarls Barkley moniker. finds Cee-Lo finally living up to his potential gnarly.

Providing the singer with textured, funky music beds on tracks like "Just A Thought" and "Smiley Faces," Danger Mouse both complements Cee-Lo's gritty



voice and brings out its innate poppy-ness. Likewise, on "Crazy" and the energetic Violent Femmes cover "Gone Daddy Gone." Cee-Lo's style draws the best out of Danger's quirky sound.

Though he may not say it to his Goodie brethren, it sounds like Cee-Lo has found his sonic better half in Danger Mouse. Maybe one monkey don't stop the show, but sometimes he finds an apt mate and steals the audience.

Noah Callahan-Bever

EXTRA! EXTRA! The group's name was inspired by NBA great

BOOMSHOTS Reggae Riddims & Reality BY ROB KENNER

From the album's sepia cover photo to its elaborate title, Peckings Presents Bitty McLean and The Supersonics On Bond Street, BITTY MCLEAN'S disc looks and sounds like a throwback to another time. More specifically, it calls to mind the rock steady era, a sweet but fleeting moment in the evolution of Jamakan music when ska's frenzied energy gave way to smooth harmonies. syncopated bass lines, and an easy, steady beat, On Bond Street

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opens with a showstopper as McLean, 34, sings the hearthreaking Motown hit "Walk Away From Love" over the rhythm track to Alton Ellis's 1967 classic "Get Ready Rocksteady." The sound is perfectly vintage, yet stunningly fresh and Immediate. As the Dennis Alcanone-style intro promises: tt's

a "Treasure Isle treat." One normally reliable British webzine was so impressed by the tune they credited Ritty with harmonizing on several other Jamaican rock steady hits during the late 1960s, despite being born in England in 1972, "No. I don't remember those sessions. says McLean with a laugh. But the



confusion is more than understandable; it's a compliment. "My main objective was to treat the Treasure Isle tracks with

respect," says McLean, who grew up around sound systems in BirmIngham and went on to work as a studio engineer for UB40 before releasing his first single, at age 21, a cover of Fats Domino's "It Keeps Rainin'," which according to him, has sold a million worldwide. "It's not any artist that would've had the opportunity to sing on those rhythm tracks," explains McLean, who received the blessing from London's esteemed Peckings family, whose close ties to Arthur "Duke" Reid gave them carte blanche to dip into the Treasure Isle catalog.

Young as he is, Bitty was born to make this record. "My earliest memories are of my dad and his sound system," says

McLean, whose father, Easton "Mack" McLean, was an electrical engineer who emigrated from Jamaica in 1962, carrying a toolbox and a suitcase full of tunes. "Hearing Dad's music In the house, on the big speakers-that was the perfect schooling," It's no surprise then that Bitty sounds so much at home on these vintage tracks; for being On Bond Street, is like

coming home.

FREE AGENT VIBE's unsigned draft pick



> NAME: D. Goode (né David Goode) > AGE: 24 > HOMETOWN: Trenton, N.J. > GENRE: R&B > FAVORITE ALBUM: Juslisen. Musia > DREAM COLLABO: India.Arie

"I've been singing all my life," says crooner D. Goode, whose father is a working session musician for local artists. "But when my parents tried to force me to sing when I was young, I found myself running away from it." Instead, he forged his own path. through athletics. After recording his first song at age 9, Goode devoted his adolescent years to playing football, landing a scho larship as fullback for the University of Delaware in 2001, he says. Still, he couldn't shake his calling. "I went to become a football star, but everything ended up coming back to music," explains Goode, With his buttery soft lyrics and slow, climactic production. Goode--a youth counselor by day--pays special attention to the ladles on love-struck ballads like "Hey Love" and "See You Smile." "People are in love with being in love," he observes. "If I can flatter that emotion, then I'll win." Chris Yuscavage BE THE JUDGE: Hear tracks at vibe.com/community/free_agent/

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HEAR THIS: VIBE's pick of the month

CHRISTINA MILIAN, FEAT, THREE 6 MAFIA. WHO'S GONNA RIDE"-This uptempo Cool & Dre production is set to the melody of Three 6's "Stay Fly." And Milian ri-ah-ah-ahides out.





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THE ISLEY BROTHERS FEATURING RONALD ISLEY A.K.A. MR. BIGGS BARY MAKIN' MUSIC

OEF SOUL CLASSICS

These legends still know how to do it.

n an era where women are often demeaned as gold-diggers or worse, the Isley Brothers' Baby Makin' Music offers a refreshing admiration for the Iadies. From the tender "You're My Star" to the tantalizing "Gotta Be With You' and the seductive "Pretty Woman," the R&B icons have created an endearing soundtrack.

The irresistible charm of Ronald Isley's distinctive tenor is always a highlight of the duo's performances. "Just Came Here To Chill," a smooth ode to a woman's natural charms, underscores Mr. Biggs's vocal whip appeal as his voice flickers over a bubbling mid-tempo jam. And



while the dreamy "Blast Off," featuring R. Kelly, possesses a touch of class with its tender vocal layering, the horny bedroom funk of "Forever Mackin" is clearly for the player's circle.

While Baby Makin' Music lacks the intensity and edge of today's R&B generation, and the production (slow, soft, and goocy) gets a little monotonous, you can't fault the Isleys for trying to reintroduce romance to the game. Dimitri Ebrlich

EXTRAI EXTRAI THE ISLEY BROTHERS were originally formed as a gospel group.



NELLY FURTADO LOOSE INTERSOPE

@@@

elly Furtado's greatest strength has always been her musical versatility. On Loose, the folksy blend of styles that made the Portuguese-Canadian pop chanteuse famous is still there. But this time, most of the Timbaland-produced tracks sound like '80s throwbacks, with techno synths and new-age chorals added for good measure. And while she loses herself in Gwen Stefani-like posturing, as on "Glow," and ethnic fusions like "No Hay Igual" or "Te Busque," Furtado masterfully combines Spanish and pop influences in her own unique way. For this artist, it's always been about finding the perfect mix.

Kevin Wong

CAM'RON PRESENTS: DUKEDAGOD DUKEDAGOD THE MOVEMENT MOVES ON

 $\Theta\Theta\Theta$

we new with a slew of solo deals on the table, New York's most bragadocious bunch hasn't forgotten about team power. But this time around, Dipset A&R Duke DaGod, who's debut was last young and hungry. In entural swager of JR Waiter on "O.G." and the no-holds-barred approach of Hell Bell on "Poppin" Off's see

the mood for a takeover. It's the spotlight-stealing turns from Dipset vets Cam'Ron and Juelz Santana on "Y'all Can't Live His Life" and "Losin My Love," however, that move this set along.

Chris Yuscavage

MURS MURRAY'S REVENGE

RECORD COLLECTION

Which is keen attention to detail, Murs could rum a mundane trip to the comer bodega into a compelling song. This blue-collar rapper, however, tackles weightier subject matter on Mumpy's Revenge, "His motivational anthem "Stertedy & Today," for example, captures the monotony of the 9+0+5 grind. Then, with the vocal samples on

monotony of the 9-to-5 grind. Then, with the vocal samples on "Dreamchases" mixed with producer 9th Wonder's trademark sanes, Murs composes a rich autobiographical yarm about growing up in Los Angeles. Though a few evcycled cliche's stall the disc-like comparing fermales to ice cream flavoo on the otherwise provocative "Dark Skinned White Girls"—Murs's payback is a big payoff. *Thomas Gollampoulos*



OUT THE BOX Beyond hip hop and R&B

> RAKIM & KEN-Y, MASTERPIECE (Universal Music Latino) José Nieves (Rakim) and Kenny Vázquez (Ken-Y) made their name performing at house parties in the city of San Juan, Puerto Rico, two years ago. Here, they package their festive reggaeton tunes for ears outside their 'hood.

E D

> HALOU, WHOLENESS & SEPARATION (Vertebrae Productions) Since their 1998 debut, this trio's mission has been to make electro-organic music. On their third album, they continue to blend acoustic instrumentation to create a spalike experience.

> VARIOUS, EXIT MUSIC: SONGS WITH RADIO HEADS (Rapster) Fourteen producers, including Mark Ronson and Meshell Ndegeocello, rework classic Radiohead songs into sublime jazz, soul, and dance treatments.

> THIEVERY CORPORATION, VERSIONS (ESL Music) In the spirit of re-invention, Thievery Corporation—who brought us "Lebanese Blonde" from the Grammy-winning Garden State soundtrack—presents their own collection of rarities, cleverly remixing songs by the likes of the Boors and Sarah McLachlan.

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PLAYERS CLUB

Daron Jones steps outside room 112.

ou could say Daron Jones leads a double life. His more public persona is being one-fourth of platinum R&B act 112, who are currently gearing up to record their sixth studio album. Lately. however, it's been Jones's side gig, as a producer and songwriter, that's got the industry buzzing. Since the 112 days, this 27-year-old native of East Atlanta has added some impressive credits, including production for R&B princess Keyshia Cole and king-of-all-media Jamie Foxx. And, as usual, he draws his inspiration from close-to-home situations (e.g. "It's Over Now," which, according to Jones, "was just some real shit I was going through because I found out my girl cheated, and I put it on wax").

>112-"CUPID"

Everyone thought Slim had a voice similar to Babyface and said, "Ya'll need a song from him." But our first album budget wasn't that big, so we couldn't afford Babyface. So I took a lot of the elements he used, like the guitars, and put my own spin on it.

> THE NOTORIOUS B.I.G.-"#!" (A) YOU TONIGHT," FEAT. R. KELLY I was doing tracks at Daddy's House, just going through the sounds. I found that lead, which was kind of the track's signature, and started playing around with that. The track was based on that whole sound; it sounded sexy but still gangster. Then I added the bass line, the keys. and drums. I got the call Biggie wanted to use my track-it was the first time I'd gotten my feet wet on an outside project.

> KEYSHIA COLE-"I SHOULD HAVE CHEATED"

The idea came from a friend who said I didn't get anything out of being faithful. So I came up with the melody on acoustic guitar and laid that

track first. Then I created a drum and piano track around that and added strings. I saw that a lot of women were feeling the way my friend was, and that the concept was an anthem.

> JAMIE FOXX-"STORM (FORECASS)"

Originally, I submitted it to someone who was supposed to make sure Janet Jackson heard it. It's about making love and comparing it to the weather. Most of the music was already done when R.L., from Next, wrote the song. It was his idea to do the weatherman noises, so we took them from a stock sound CD. I don't think Janet ever heard it.

> 112-"ANYWHERE"

When I made that, I was thinking from a marketing standpoint, After our first album, we were billed as the gentlemen of R&B, but the media took the nice thing too far. I wanted to let people know we're grown now, so I also wrote the chorus ("On the kitchen floor, as I softly pull your hair / We can do it anywhere"). At that time, I was working with the Roland JV- 2080, an Akai MPC3000, and a Korg Triton keyboard. But most of the sounds came from the 2080, except the drums, which came from the MPC.

> 112--"IT'S OVER NOW"

I made that track in my mom's living room, It was our first number one, so I remember it well. Around then, the hot joint in the club was Mobb Deep's "Quiet Storm (Remix)," featuring Lil' Kim. I thought, If that was an R&B track, it would be hot. So I added strings and piano to the "White Lines" bass line to make it more musical. Hip hop has the freedom to get on the record and say, "Fuck all y'all!" I wanted to translate that into R&B. Sometimes I feel like that. Amy Linden

"My Boyfriend's SECRET ... for Amazing SEX!"

s a faithful reader of your magazine, I just had to tell your readers about a recent experience I had with my boyfriend. First, let me just say he is a great guy. But, after dating for six months, it seemed he was having confidence issues in

AND out of bed. It was having a real negative effect on his sexual prowess and let's face it, with any new relationship, it usually doesn't last very long without a real strong sexual connection. My dilemma was that I really liked the guy.

Thankfully, I didn't have to make a difficult decision because everything changed a few days ago. I came home from work and he basically tore my clothes off before I even made it through the door. Right there on the stairs he practically pounced on me. Confident, aggressive, he made all the right moves. I definitely felt sensations I'd never felt before... in places I forgot existed. We made love for what seemed like an eternity. I never knew what some of my friends meant when they said the earth moved from having sex - I do now. "I can honestly say it was the best sex I've ever had in my entire life!"

When I asked him what was going on - what brought about the change - he wouldn't answer me. So I did what any red-blooded American woman would do, I started snooping. It didn't take me long to figure out his secret. In his underwear drawer under the "men's magazines," was a bottle of MAXODERM Connection. After reading the fine print and finding the website. I went online to maxodermct.com to discover more about this magic in a bottle.

MAXODERM Connection (of which I'm having my boyfriend buy a lifetime supply) is a lotion that's applied topically to the most "intimate areas". An all natural mix of herbs and who knows what brings blood flow straight to the source - that's when amazing things start to happen. He achieves harder, stronger erections and my orgasms go through the roof! We aren't into taking pills of any kind, not even aspirin - so I was relieved to find he was using something topical without any systemic side effects. Unless you want to think of great sex as a side effect, because that's definitely what's going on at our place - ALL the time!

So...please print this letter. Anyone who wants to experience mind-blowing intimacy has to try MAXODERM Connection. They need to tell their boyfriends, husbands or partners about this product. Or just "accidentally" leave a bottle lying around for them to "accidentally" find. I really want to thank the woman who developed MAXODERM Connection - only a woman could design something that feels this good.



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> "WHEN YOU'RE MAD," NE-YO (Def Jam)

A: Aww/I This is so sweet.
B: What? That she's mad, and
all he's thinking about is sex?
A: No, he just finds her sexy
when she's mad.
B: What's the remix? "You're
Sexy When Sick"?
A: The only one sick here
is you.



> "TORN," LETOYA

LUCKETT (Capitol)

A: Kinda Kelly Rowland-ish,
don't you think?

B: No! But she was a Destiny's Child—before the cat
fight.

A: Beyoncé and 'em better

watch out!

B: Wow! This is a really nice comeback.

A: Goes to show, you never

comeback.

A: Goes to show, you never know what destiny may have in store.



> "GETTIN' SOME,"

SHAWMA (Disturbing Tha Peace/Def Jam) A: Gettin' some head? Gasp! B: This is a banger in the club, tho.

A: But she samples Too \$hort's "Blowjob Betty." B: Yes. He was, um, a-head of his time. A: And apparently so is she.



> "SNITCH." OBJETRICE.

FEAT. AKON (Shady)
At Ayo, this sounds like that
dude with the Fugees.
Br John Forte? Naw, silly, this
is Eminem's homie, Obie.
At Either way, Akon kills the
street anthem hooks, huh?
Bt Yeah. But does hip hop
really need another stop
snitching song?

A: Tell it, partna. Tell it.

HEAR THIS: VIBE's pick of the month

LIL WAYNE, FEAT. ROBIN THICKE "SHOOTER"—Alongside Thicke's dramatic crooning, Weezy takes aim and shoots off his mouth. Put 'em in the air, this is a stick-up!



INDIE BEAT Underdogs sound off





> THE COUP, PICK A BIGGER WEAPON (Epitaph) Flanked by a solid live band that includes Audioslave guitarist Tom Morello, front man Boots Riley balances razor-sharp political barbs with laugh-out-loud one-liners on the veteran rap group's latest installment.

PEOPLE UNDER THE STAIRS

> PEOPLE UNDER THE STAIRS, STEPFATHER (Basement) The L.A.-based duo of Double K and Thes One meshes old-school techniques, like lowfi drums, record-scratching, and pass-the-mic emceeing, with lush, live instrumentation and a party-all-the-time attitude.



> MR. NOGATCO AKA KOOL KEITH, NOGATCO RD. (Insomniac) Intergalactic imagery, demented pop culture references, and paranold effects steer this spaceship ride of a concept album by the underground's mad scientist.



> DUDLEY PERKINS, EXPRESSIONS (2012 A.U.) (Stones Throw) Hailing from Oxnard, Calif., the hometown of album producer and homie Madlib. rapper-turned-neo-soulster Perkins employs his free-flowing style of talk-singing over in-the-pocket samples on his '70s-flavored follow-up.

LAB NOTES

Who's doing what with whom in the studio

Summer may officially kick off on June 21, but don't expect your favorite artists to take any days off. Need proof, see Ludacris, who is hard at work polishing off his fifth Def Jam album, Release Therapy, After a brief hiatus from the booth he's been running his mouf with Jermaine Dupri, Pharrell, Timba land, and will.i.am. Meanwhile, Dipset honcho Jim Jones is looking to reignite his love affair with the season of summer. Last time. it was his steamy relationship with Miami. This go-round, Jones's wandering eye brings him back to the Rotten Apple, where fellow Byrd Gangers Max B, Jha Jha, and Stack Bundle



are expected to spend time in the sun penning verses for his asvet-untitled third album. He also links up with Pete Rock, David Banner, and Deric "D-Dot" Angelettie. And for the American Idol-addicted, Fantasia's got your fix. She's been sweating it out in the studio with Missy Elliott, JD, Kanye West, and Ne-Yo in preparation for her sophomore re-up. What else is there to do in the summer, rest?

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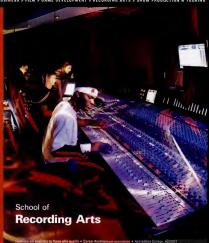
 Rolling Stone Magazine August 11, 2005



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COVER STORY: "MOUTH ALMIGHTY"

COVER and PAGE 118: Tank, \$15, by American Apparel (americanapparel.net).

PAGE 7: Vest, \$700, by 5001 Flavors (5001flavors.com); thermal, \$20, by American Apparel (americanapparel.net); cap, \$32, by New Era Cap (neweracap.com).

PAGE 121: Jacket, \$600, by Pelle Pelle, at Genesis, N.Y.C. (212-980-1514); hoodie, \$40, by Champion (championcatalog.com); jeans, \$650, by Red Monkey, at Atrium, N.Y.C. (212-719-1130); sneakers, \$300, by Gibran K. Brown (brooklynbrowns.com).

PAGE 125: Jacket, \$3,000, by JH Design Group; thermal, \$20, by American Apparel at Genesis, N.Y.C. (212-980-1514); sunglasses, \$500, by Fendi, at Genesis, N.Y.C. (212-980-1514).

FASHION: "THE HUNTED"

PAGE 14: Coat, 52°S, by Pornarina, L.A. (323-782-7901): dress, 3248, by Armaal Basen Gemporforamicum) encetizer, 431. by GirlProps (girlprops.com); watch, \$140, by Michael Michael Kors at Nordstrom foundstromothy bracelet, 510, by Rocawear (800-839-6016); bracelet, 5110, by Bohalla Biu (Gahlas), book point, bog, \$1.35°, by Christian Louboutin, N.Y.C. (212-396-1884); sandisk, \$515, by Sergio Rossi, N.Y.C. (212-96-3303), Shirt, \$420, by Parin Wood (Orfamwoodmine.com); *511*, \$5, by Hanse (Nanes.com); shorts, \$50, by Polo Jeans Co. Ralph Lauren, at Mary's (marys.com); sneaker, \$580, by Mike (nielebron.com).

PAGE 146-5 Shirt, SS5, by Pepe Jeans London (888-350-7373); Iank, \$220, by Jole Homme by Hedl Silmans, NXC, (212-428-600); jeans, \$330, by Sids u(evisu.com); bracelet, \$150, by Ollvia K.M. Chruschaski, NXC, (917-957-7219); wristband by Catch A Fire (catchafire.com); scard, \$115, by Merimés (hermes.com); bag, \$3,270, by Chiloé, NXC, (212-294-6126); sandist, \$595, by YSL (ysl.com). Sweatshirt, \$100, by Three Kings (herpercs.uk.com); jeachet, \$18.45, by Louis Vultton (doulsvuirton.com); jeans, \$86, by Azzuré (azzure denim.com); wristband, \$10, by Penguin at Maxy's (marys.com); sneaker, \$14.40, by Nike (nikeboms); sneaker, \$14.00, by Nike (nikeboms).

PAGE 148: Top, \$750, by Guccl (guccizom); skirt, \$84, by Apple Bottoms by Nelly (applebottoms.com); sweatpants, available upon request, by Orles Van Noten (driesannoten.be); scaf by Lauren by Ralph Lauren (colo.com); sunglasses, \$185, by July Coutture, at Bloomingdales (bloom ingdales.com); earings, \$8, by Inflirepos (gir/pros, com); necklase, \$83, and bracelets, \$31 each, all by Rocawear (800-839-6016); bag, \$1,100, by Louis Vuitton (dou's without com); sandals, \$125, by Steven by Steve Madeen (stevenaddecom). Faint, \$24, by SouthPole (south)neb-usa.com); tank, \$20, by Calvin Klein CASG (cluzom); sweatpants, \$1,150, by Calvin Klein CASG (cluzom); sweatpants, \$1,150, by Calvin Klein CASG (cluzom); sweatpants, \$1,150, by Ray Ban

PAGE 150: Coal, § 1.250. by Burberry (burberry.com): top, available upon request, and handbag, § 4.155, both by Alexander McQueen, N.Y.C. (212-645-1797); jeans, § 40. by Levi's (levi/com): earlings, § 20. by Roxanne Assoulin for Lee Angel (feeanget.com): top bracelet, § 325, bottom bracelet, § 130, and ring, § 165, all by Aeles i Birtan, N.Y.C. (212-625-8340); watch, § 152, by Donald J. Trump Signature Watch Collection, at Macy's (macys.com): sunglasses, § 325, by Chanel (800-559-0005), sinalsis, § 640, by Christian Lobuboutin, Bevery Hill (\$100-479-900). Shirt, \$72. bu Acceste

(rayban.com); boots, \$145, by Timberland (timberland.com).

(lacoste.com); T-shirt, \$29, by 2(x)ist, at Bloomingdale's

(bloomingdales.com); pants, \$50, by Gap (gap.com); hat, \$38, by Sean John (seanjohn.com); sunglasses, \$99, by Ray-Ban (rayban.com); watch, \$250, by Zodlac (zodiacwatches.com); sneakers, \$140, by Greedy Genius (greedy genius.com).

PAGE 151: Blazer, \$198, by Tommy Hilfiger (tommy.com); T-shirt, \$29, by 2(x) ist at Bloomingdale's (bloomingdale's.com); shorts, \$48, by Enyce (enyce.com); cap, \$30, by New Era Cap (neweracap.com); bag, \$335, by Jack

Spade (jackspade.com). Shirit, \$200. by. July; Couture Men, at Barney's New York (barneys.com); blouse, \$30, by Tara Jarmon Collection for Go International for Target (target.com); skirt, \$59, by Enyce, at Macy's (macys.com); earlings, \$0, by Gilfbrops (girlprops.com); belt, \$495, by YSL (yst.com); braceles, \$31 or 60, by Konanne Assoulin for Lee Angel (leeangel.com); watch, \$140, by Michael Michael Kors, at Nordstrom (nordstrom.com); bag, \$595, by Michael Kors (michaelkors.com); sandals, \$145, by Beverly Feldman (beverly/demanshoes.com).

PAGE 152 Cardigan, \$350, by Polo by Ralph Lauren (colo.com); west, \$38, by Leu's (evel.com); tank, \$175, by Carberine Malandrich, N.M.C. (212-229-8710); shorts, \$395, by Replay (888-REPLAY8); earrings, \$65, by Grace (Chin for Dahila Blu (Gahifalulcom); scarf, \$5.5, by 8 Eddle Bauer (800-426-8002); boots, \$650, by Celine (866-60-421); tote, \$1,565, by Bofor by John Galllano (800-929-100R). Shirt, \$42, and sneekers, \$45, both by Phan Farm (Inhafarmon)." Shirt by Pege-Bans London (pegiperancom); shorts by Rocawear (rocawearcom); cap, \$28, by Sean John

PAGE 153: Dress, \$78, by BCBGirls, at Dillard's (dillards.com); hoops, \$20, by GilfProps (girlprops.com); watch, \$100, by Michael Michael Kors, at Maky's (margs.com); ring, \$50, by Limoges Jewelry (Imogesievelr.com); clutch, \$800, by Jane Boilinger (Janebolinger.com); Blazer, \$775, by Just Cavalli, Las Vegas (702-893-3542); shirt, \$50, by Polo Jeans Co. Ralph Lauren, at Mary's (marg-scom); partis, \$240, by *34/25com).

"DESIGNER HOUSE"

All items available at Calvin Klein Store, N.Y.C. (212-292-9000) unless otherwise noted.

PAGE 1540 Diver Cover, 5350, queen-size flat sheet, 595; textured triangle pillow, \$115; crooked-stirch pillow, \$210, all by Calvin Klein Home. Caftan, \$3,400, and skirt, \$2,685; both by Calvin Klein Collection; earrings, \$380, by Lia Sophia (discophia.com): bore bangle, \$35, and wood bangle, \$35, both by Issac Manevitz for Ben-Amun (ben-amun.com). Tank, \$155, pant, \$550, and key Chân all by Calvin Klein Collection.

All items available at emporioarmani.com unless otherwise noted. PAGE 155: Orizzonte rug, \$13.000; raphael sofa, \$8.475; and arm chair, \$6.375; paris table, \$895; brass-foot dam2ca table, \$3.500; alcazar pearshaped murano glass vases, \$695; \$995; and revolution lamp, \$2.400, all by Armani Casa, 1644; \$998; *Folit; \$248; and sneakers, \$278; all by Emporia Armanije; paris, \$248, by Armani Jeans, lacket, \$1.158, and shirt, \$228, both by Emporio Armani; jeans, \$178, by Armani Jeans; earrings, \$20, by Limogels Jewelty (limogesjewelty.com); ring, \$8, by GirlProps (girlprops.com); sandal, \$775, by Giorgio Armani, Shirt and skirt, prices available upon request, both by Armani Junior.

GODDESS: "PLAYING THE GAME"

PAGE 156: Garter, \$30, by Victoria's Secret (victoriassecret.com); sandals, \$70, by Baby Phat by Kimora Lee Simmons (babyphat.com).

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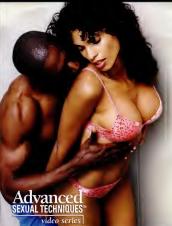
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50 Cent flick? 2. And isn't it odd that, after

all his rants about rappers turned actors. Samuel L. Jackson will be starring with Fif in Home of the Brave?

3. Don't you wanna know who Nick Cannon cheated on Christina

Milian with?

4. Can someone please tell Kanve West to button up his low-cut Saturday Night Fever shirts? 5. Instead of

rebuilding Iraq. shouldn't we rebuild New Orleans first?

6. Does Nelly's Apple Bottoms clothing really need a children's line?

7. Where's Joe Budden?

8. Doesn't Heather Headley look like Brandy's older sister in her "In My Mind" video?

9. Aren't you hoping Paul Wall was kidding when he said he had a grill ready for his newborn son?

10. If she's against selling out. why is Lauryn Hill doing Verizon Wireless ads?







11. Is hyphy music really the new crunk? 12. How crazy is it to say "Academy Award winners

> Three 6 Mafia"? 13. And since they shouted him out, is George Clooney hip hop's new favorite white boy?

14. Doesn't it seem like a stretch for Jesse L. Martin to play Marvin Gave in an upcoming biopic? 15. Wouldn't it

be scary if Paris Hilton's album was actually good? 16. How much will it

cost the Game if he removes his G Unit tattoo?

17. Doesn't Missy take it a little far when she compares herself to Nia Long in the "Touch It" remix? 18. Aren't you proud of Dave Chappelle for being so honest

about how ruthless show biz can be? 19. And now that Jay-Z has

exposed Line Item 36, will beef continue to be part of the marketing plan? 20. What song will be this

summer's anthem?

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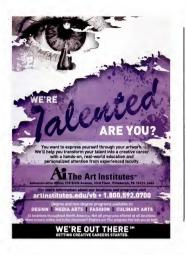


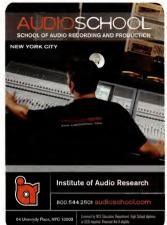


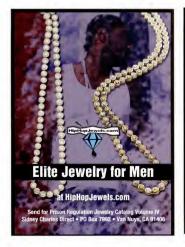
















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REASONABLE DOUBT

A decade after its release, Jay-Z's opus stands as rap's most riveting reflection of a hustler's life.

Il I really need to know I learned in kindergarten.
But all I need to know about the grind, I learned
from Reasonable Doubt.

And I'm not alone. When Shawn Catter stepped to the mic over to years ago to record his debut album, his talent and audactive stablished a template for a whole generation of hustlers turned rappers who crawled out of the woodwork and pored over Jay-Z's slinging 'curriculum. Which isn't to say they didn't earn their stripes in the street—it's just that you wouldn't know it from their lyrics, which have regurgitated Jay's vertacular, insights, and observations so many times over that his once groundbreaking images are now hip hop of clichés.

At the time of Reasonable Doubt's release, Biggie, Boot Camp, and Mobb Deep ruled with stories of block wars and life lived in a four-by-four gird, Just like Nirvana made hair metal obsolete, Jay's don persona, combined with his sheer rhyming skill and bravado, made other rappers look like bottom-fedeers. On "Friend Or Foe" and other tracks, he

JAY STEPPED BACK FROM THE GLORY OF THE GAME AND REVEALED ITS UGLINESS.

detailed out-of-state operations that clearly identified himself as higher on the food chain than your favorite rapper. He lived on a scale that was previously unimaginable. "Partna, I'm still spendin' money from '88!" he announced on "Dead Presidents II," then pointed to his knowledge of the finer things in life on numbers like "Feelin' It" and "Cashmere Thoughts."

It wann't just his Big Willie-ness-excuse me, Williamness-however, hat set Jay apart. While Biggie and Tupac admitted to the suicidal ambitions of a rider under pressure, Jay stepped back from the glory of the game and revealed the motional toll of its ugliness. He allowed himself to be vulnerable on songs like "Regrest" and "D'Evils," where he verstles with the consequence of money and volence on life-long friendships. With "Cant Like," its themes of isolation and suffocating paranoia capture feelings of desperation with an honesty rarely seen in rar

Unfortunately, his sons and grandsons trace his design without understanding the underlying structural integrity with at makes Racandah Doubt stand at lten years after its release. And listening to them gets te-di-ous, so young'uns, please, for the sake of hip hop, keep one eye open, like CBS. Nauh Callabara Beare

BROOKLYN'S FINEST: Jay's debut is undoubtedly a classic.



